




"MY LADY CLANCARTY"

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My Lady Clancarty

Mary Imlay Taylor's Novels

ON THE RED STAIRCASE.

AN IMPERIAL LOVER.

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LITTLE MISTRESS GOOD HOPE AND OTHER
FAIRY STORIES.

THE REBELLION OF THE PRINCESS.

MY LADY CLANCARTY.



My Lady Clancarty

BEING THE
TRUE STORY OF THE EARL OF CLANCARTY
AND LADY ELIZABETH SPENCER

BY

MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "On the Red Staircase," "The Cobbler of Nimes,"
"The Rebellion of the Princess," etc.

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ALICE BARBER STEPHENS

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TO MY MOST CONSTANT READER,
MY MOTHER

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MY LADY CLANCARTY

*Being the True Story of the Earl of Clancarty
and Lady Elizabeth Spencer*

CHAPTER I

“ ROSEEN DHU ”

LADY BETTY shaded her eyes with her hand and looked out on the rose garden of Althorpe.

At her feet the lawn was close clipped and green ; beyond was a garland of many colors, roses by hundreds and tens of hundreds, the warmth and glow of the sun upon them ; behind them, the long avenue of limes and beeches, and between the trees vistas of level land with the deer moving to and fro.

The butterflies — a little host of them — whirled under the window, and her ladyship smiled.

“ Come, Alice,” she said, “ ’t is too fair a day to linger indoors. Bring your lute, girl, and we’ll sing one of those dear Irish ballads where none may hear it, to carp and scold, —

My Lady Clancarty

none, indeed, but the rooks and butterflies, or perchance the roses. What sayst thou, Alice, may not a rose hear sweet sounds when it exhales such sweet perfume?"

"I know not, madam," replied her handmaid soberly, as she laid aside her needlework and reached for her lute; "but sometimes, truly, I think 't would be well if ears were fewer in this world."

"Ay, or tongues more gentle," assented Lady Betty laughing, as she stepped out of the window to the lawn, followed by her attendant.

Both were young girls, but youth and the rosy comeliness of youth sat more lightly on the handmaid Alice, whose simple face and figure suggested nothing more subtle than the virtue and homely wisdom of a country girl. It was quite different with Lady Betty Clancarty, the daughter of the Earl of Sunderland and the maiden wife of an Irish peer. There was a slight pensiveness to her beauty, for beautiful she was; yet there were times when the gayety of a vivacious spirit broke through all restraints, and she was the light-hearted, witty girl that nature had intended her to be. Her eyes — beautiful eyes they were, too, — were large, clear and sparkling with spirit, and

“*Roseen Dhu*”

the soft tints of her complexion and the glossy waves of her dark hair combined to make a charming picture, far more human and bewitching, indeed, than her own portrait from the brush of Lely, hanging in the great gallery at Althorpe. The pensiveness of her expression showed only when her face was in repose; when she smiled the sun shone through the cloud. Her figure was gracefully tall in its gown of white dimity flowered with pink, the neck dressed open with falls of lace, and the full sleeves loose and flowing at the elbow.

She moved lightly and swiftly across the lawn, one white hand resting on the shoulder of her handmaid, who was shorter and fuller in outline than her mistress. Though their stations were thus widely sundered, a frank girlish friendship existed between them, and Lady Betty had few secrets that were not shared by Alice Lynn. They had grown up in the same household; the one child waiting on the other on all state occasions, but usually her playmate, after the fashion of those days when the feudal tie of lord and vassal still bound old servants and their descendants to their masters. The ancestors of Alice Lynn had borne the banner of the Despencers in many a bloody field; she came of good yeo-

My Lady Clancarty

man stock, worthy of honor and trust, and she was single-hearted in her devotion to Lady Clancarty. They made a charming picture, walking through winding paths and talking freely, with little reference to their respective stations in the great world beyond Althorpe.

“Ah, the roses,” Lady Betty said, “I know not whether I love them best in their first budding or in their prime, or when the last few pale blossoms struggle to unfold under wintry skies, like our poor hearts, Alice, that need to be warmed by the sunshine of prosperous love. Mine should have shrivelled up long ago — like an old dried leaf. But it has not,” she added, smiling and laying her hand on her bosom; “I feel it — it throbs — it is warm and strong and whole, Alice, and yet — I am a wife and, for aught I know, a widow too !”

“There be many wives who would fain be widows, I trow,” retorted Alice, bluntly, and Lady Betty laughed gayly and lightly, the sun shining in her lustrous eyes.

“Perchance I am happy, then, in not knowing my husband’s face,” she said; and added musingly, “a strange fate is mine, Alice, married at eleven and then separated forever from my husband by a gulf as wide as — as the infinite space; I know no stronger simile.

“*Roseen Dhu*”

Here am I, the daughter of a Whig peer, who is a counsellor of King William's, and the sister of a burning Whig—for Spencer is on fire, I am sure—and yet I am the wife, the wedded wife, of an Irish rebel and Jacobite; an outlaw from his country and a stranger even to me. What a fate!” and she shook her head with a pensive air, though a smile lurked about her lips for, after all, she could not mourn the absence of an unknown spouse.

“’T was wrong to marry a child of such tender years, my lady,” the handmaid said indignantly; “to tie you up—one of the loveliest women in England—to a—a—” she broke off confused, catching Lady Betty's eye.

“A what, Alice?” the countess asked dryly; “ay, I know by your blushes and confusion that you have caught the contagion, that you believe with Lord Spencer that my husband is a consummate villain. But look you, my girl, if there is one thing above another that would make me love a man and take up his cause, it is to find him the object of senseless and bitter abuse. What of it if Clancarty has not sought me? how could he? Is he not banished from the kingdom, stripped of his estates, and denied even his most natural and

My Lady Clancarty

sacred rights?" Lady Clancarty's eyes sparkled with indignation. "What of it, if he is a Jacobite and a Papist? Is he the only man who has changed his faith? I trow not!—though I should be the last one to say it," and she broke off, blushing crimson.

The thought of her own father's apostasy, of his frequent political somersaults, overwhelmed her, and she recollected her own dignity in time to bridle her impulsive tongue.

Alice was too discreet to take up the argument; she stooped, instead, to gather some violets, and arranged them slowly and in silence. Lady Betty walked ahead of her to a little rustic seat, and sitting down held out her hand with an impatient gesture.

"Give hither the violets, Alice," she said imperiously, "and sing me a song. I am in as black a mood as ever Saul was, and may do you a mischief if you do not soothe me."

Alice smiled. "I fear you not, dear Lady Betty," she said, tuning her lute; "your anger passes over as quickly as a storm-cloud in April weather. What shall I sing you, madam?"

A roguish smile twinkled in Lady Clancarty's eyes.

"You shall do penance, lass, and sing me either a Papist hymn or an Irish ballad."

“*Roseen Dhu*”

“Nay, I am no Papist, but a good Protestant,” said Alice, stiffly, “therefore it must be an Irish ballad, which is what you really want, my lady !”

Lady Betty laughed softly.

“’T is true, my girl,” she said, clasping her hands about her knees, the full sleeves falling away from arms as white as milk. “I love the ballads ; whether for his sake or their own, I know not,” and she bent her head listening as the handmaid played the first plaintive notes on her lute.

Alice was no contemptible musician, and she touched the instrument softly with loving fingers, playing the first sweet sad chords of that old Irish air and Jacobite ballad, “*Roseen Dhu*,” or “*Dark Rosaleen*.”

The garden and the great park beyond and around it were quiet save for the cawing of the hundreds of rooks that haunted those stately avenues of trees. The warmth and the soft murmuring of the late summer were there ; here was the deep shadow of stately groves, yonder the wide sunshine on level lawns, but the place was deserted save for the two young women and the deer that were so tame that they pressed close about them, looking through the trees with soft brown eyes, and seeming to

My Lady Clancarty

listen to the wild, plaintive notes of the ballad,
as Alice sang in a full, mellow voice :

“ All day long in unrest
To and fro do I move,
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love !
The heart in my bosom faints,
To think of you, my queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My dark Rosaleen !
My own Rosaleen !
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My dark Rosaleen ! ”

Midway in the song the girl paused, still
playing the air softly.

“ My lady,” she said, in an undertone,
“ there is some one yonder in the shrubbery.”

“ ’Tis Melissa,” replied Lady Clancarty ;
“ I have seen her. She loves to lurk behind a
bush, and to slip along softly as a cat upon nut-
shells ; ’t is her nature. Faith, I must buy her
some bells for her toes. Go on, my girl ; I
care not,” she added, laughing, “ and I do
love the tune. Ah, ‘ Rosaleen, my own Rosa-
leen ! ’ ” she hummed, keeping time with her
slender hand.

Alice sang again :

“*Roseen Dhu*”

“ Over dew, over sands,
Will I fly for your weal :
Your holy white hands
Shall gird me with steel.
At home — in your emerald bowers,
From morning’s dawn till e’en,
You ’ll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
My dark Rosaleen !
My fond Rosaleen !
You ’ll think of me, through daylight’s hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
My dark Rosaleen !”

Suddenly Lady Clancarty started and half rose, interrupting the singer ; but as Alice looked up in alarm, she sat down again, rosy and defiant.

“ Pshaw !” she said ; “ go on, Alice, there comes Spencer himself, and, forsooth, I would not be frightened out of my pleasure.”

“ But, my lady,” protested Alice, in confusion, “ he will be dreadfully angry, he always is !”

“ To be sure he will,” retorted Lady Betty, with a ripple of laughter, “ therefore sing, lass, and I will sing, too.”

Alice still hesitated, her eyes on the figure of a young man who was coming swiftly across the lawn, but her mistress stamped her foot.

My Lady Clancarty

“Sing!” she commanded so sharply that Alice obeyed hastily, and in a moment the countess’ rich contralto joined her voice in singing the last passionate verse of “Roseen Dhu.”

“O ! the Erne shall run red
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun peal and slogan cry
Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen !
The judgment hour must be nigh
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My dark Rosaleen !”

CHAPTER II

BROTHER AND SISTER

LORD CHARLES SPENCER paused in the centre of the triangle. "A very pretty performance," he said with a sneer, "a very proper performance — to sing Jacobite ballads here!"

"I trow they are not the first that have been sung here, brother," retorted Lady Betty pertly.

"You have a saucy tongue, Elizabeth," replied her brother rudely, turning white rather than red, for in this young man's disposition anger went white, not red. "'T would go hard with you if my father heard that."

"'T would go hard with you if my father heard *that*!" mocked Lady Betty incorrigible. "Come, come, Charles, talk of something agreeable. What is the volume under your arm? Noah's observations on droughts? or Adam's reflections on mothers-in-law? or Cain's on brotherly love? Faith, I always expect

My Lady Clancarty

something profound from the most erudite ornament of the Whig party."

"I wish I might look as certainly for discretion in Elizabeth Spencer," he replied with acrimony.

"In Elizabeth Clancarty," corrected the countess, flashing an indignant glance at him.

"You are marvellously proud of that beggar's name," retorted her brother, with cutting irony.

Lady Clancarty's face crimsoned with anger.

"You are a hypocrite, Spencer!" she said, stamping her foot.

"Family insults in public are always becoming," said Lord Spencer, controlling himself with an effort, but white to the lips.

"Forsooth, who began it?" recriminated his high-spirited sister; "you might better indeed talk of other things. Of your fine clothes, for instance; you are truly 'the glass of fashion,' my lord, pink satin waistcoat and breeches, gray plush coat, point of Venice ruffles, white silk stockings, clocked, too, with pink, French shoes and buckles,—mercy on us, sir! what splendor for beggarly Lady Clancarty and quiet Althorpe!"

Lord Spencer, who was indeed dressed in the extreme of fashion, bit his lip, scowling

Brother and Sister

darkly at Lady Betty and Alice, who remained discreetly in the background.

"You do well to boast of your dishonored name, madam," he said coldly, "but my Lord Sunderland intends that you shall be divorced from that disreputable Irish rebel."

"And what if I will not, my lord?" asked the countess, her face blazing with defiance.

"You are a fool," said Spencer sharply; "happy you would be — dragged into exile by a rake and a scapegrace — but, pshaw! what nonsense I talk —"

"You do, sir!" interrupted his sister defiantly.

"Nonsense because Clancarty does not want you." He continued, with a provoking drawl, "Where is your husband, my lady? Forsooth you do not know — but I do! At Saint Germain and at Paris; a gambler, a rake, a cutpurse, with half a dozen lady-loves to —"

"Silence!" cried Lady Betty furiously, rising in her indignation. "Shame on you, sir, to insult a woman and she your sister, and to blacken a gallant gentleman behind his back. Is that your virtue? Faith, I believe a witty rogue would be a happier companion than a virtuous bore!"

My Lady Clancarty

“Your tongue will cut your throat yet, madam,” said Spencer harshly; “you have worked yourself into this passion; you have never seen your husband since childhood, and you do not know him. It is my duty as your brother, a painful duty, I admit,” he said pompously, “to tell you the truth. Lord Clancarty is a notorious scamp, a dissolute fellow, a murderer and oppressor; and, as for you, what does he care for you? You little fool, he has never sought you—and never will!” and with this taunt my lord turned on his heel and walked decorously but swiftly away, wise enough to fly before his sister could retaliate.

Lady Betty stood as he had left her for a moment, her little hands clenched and her face crimson.

“The mean hypocrite!” she cried, “to fling it in my teeth. I vow I sometimes almost hate Spencer—and yet he is my brother. I’m a beast, Alice, a wretch! but oh!” and suddenly her mood changed; she threw herself on the garden-seat, trembling with emotion, tears on her dark lashes. “Oh, why must I be so cruelly insulted? ’Tis true, Alice, ’tis true; Clancarty has never even cared to claim his wife! Think of it, I—I—Betty Spencer,

Brother and Sister

scorned by an Irish Jacobite ! ” and she burst into tears.

“ My lady,” purred a smooth voice, as the other attendant suddenly and softly stepped into view, from the friendly shadow of an elm ; “ be consoled, ’t is even as Lord Spencer — ”

“ Go ! ” cried the countess furiously, dashing away her tears and stamping her foot at Melissa. “ Go ! What do I want of your consolation, you eavesdropper ! ”

“ My lady, I beg pardon,” stammered the confused waiting-woman, “ I — ”

“ Go ! ” repeated the countess imperiously, with a gesture of disdain. “ When I want you, I will summon you.”

With a look of ill-disguised anger on her smooth face, but with an attempted air of humility, the attendant withdrew as softly as she had approached, and Lady Betty recalled her dignity.

“ Pshaw ! ” she said, “ what a creature I am, Alice, so to betray myself, and to stoop to quarrel with that worm, Melissa ! I did not think, I never think ; but, oh, my girl, my lot has many thorns ! Alas, and alas !

‘ Once I bloomed a maiden young
A widow’s woe now moves my tongue ; ’

My Lady Clancarty

and a widow by desertion. Ah, how I hate the taunt!" and she stamped her foot.

"Heed it not, dear Lady Betty," murmured Alice, "'t is not true."

"Ah, but it is, girl, it is," cried Lady Clancarty, with an impatient gesture, "and I despise myself for caring."

"Are you sure, madam, that Lord Clancarty has made no effort to claim his bride, or to see you?" Alice asked soberly, standing alone in the triangle opposite Lady Betty, the sun shining in a friendly fashion on her comely, honest face.

"Am I sure?" repeated the countess in surprise, and her expression changed swiftly; "do you think he may have tried to communicate with me and failed?"

"Why not, my lady?" replied the hand-maid simply; "we know how my Lord Spencer feels; and your father, the earl, madam, is, perhaps, as little inclined toward your husband."

Lady Betty sat looking down reflectively, tapping her foot on the gravel path.

"It may be so," she said thoughtfully; "your brain is growing keen, Alice, from crossing swords with mine!" and she laughed, for she was an April creature with swift-changing moods. She rose, throwing out her hands

Brother and Sister

with a pretty gesture, as though she threw care to the winds.

“O Donough Macarthy, Earl of Clancarty, art worthy all these heart beats of mine?” she cried, and laughed as gayly as a child. “I tell thee, Alice, he has not seen me for years, not since I was eleven, and he pictures me with a turned-up nose and freckles and red hair, and is half frightened to death at the thought of his English bride.”

“Your hair was never red, my lady,” said Alice soberly.

“Pshaw, child, he has forgotten, poor lad!” laughed Lady Betty, herself again; “he may think my nose red, too!”

CHAPTER III

LADY BETTY AND HER FATHER

IT was after sundown and the light was dim in the great gallery of Althorpe. Candles were set in silver sconces at intervals down its whole length of over a hundred feet, but between lay soft shadows, and the pictured faces of many famous men and women, of sovereigns of England, statesmen, soldiers, and court beauties, looked down from the walls on either hand. Holbein and Van Dyke and Lely had wrought upon these canvases. Here was the famous Duchess of Cleveland, painted by Lely, and the Countess of Grammont, and yonder was Lady Portsmouth and Nell Gwynne herself; and in this strange company, the fair, sweet, coquettish face of Betty Clancarty, lovely as any of the court beauties and far more lovable and true.

The floor was polished and strewn with splendid rugs; far-off India, Turkey, Italy, France, and Holland had contributed rugs and

Lady Betty and Her Father

tapestries, paintings, beautiful bric-a-brac and statuary to decorate the famous gallery of the Spencers, where Anne of Denmark, Queen of James the First, and the young Prince Charles, the future royal martyr, saw the Masque of Ben Jonson. Here, too, came doubtless King Charles the First, he who created Henry Spencer Earl of Sunderland; here, also, reigned the daughter of the Sidneys, Dorothy, Countess of Sunderland, the heroine of Waller's verses and the grandmother of Lady Betty. A gallery full of memories, where royalty and beauty smiled dimly from the great canvases, and every footstep woke an echo of the past.

At that sunset hour the place was quiet save for the cawing of the rooks under the eaves, for they haunted every corner of the house and congregated in the long avenues that enfiladed the park; yet even the sound of bird consultations did not disturb the reverie of the man who slowly paced up and down the gallery — a man past middle age with an inscrutable face, his head a little bowed as he walked, his hands behind his back, his dress a long gown of black velvet, ruffles of lace at the throat and over the slender white hands — a strange man, self-possessed, complacent, smooth, infinitely winning of address, and one of the most unscrupulous poli-

My Lady Clancarty

ticians and time-servers of that time-serving age when William the Third knew not where to look among his English counsellors for steady faith, when it was no uncommon thing for a man to swear allegiance both at Westminster and Saint Germain, and to be an apostate besides. Even in that age of falsehood and double dealing, Robert, second Earl of Sunderland, excelled his fellows; but if he excelled them in falsehood, so did he also in discernment, in the power to read men, and to win them by his polished and smooth address, the charm of a personality that had won even upon the cold astuteness of the king himself.

Whatever his thoughts were now, Lord Sunderland's face was placid, his perfect mask of serenity immutable, as he walked to and fro, now and then pausing to look critically at a fine picture, or to take counsel with himself, and he looked up with a calm smile when the door at the farther end of the gallery opened and the graceful figure of Lady Betty came swiftly toward him. He admired his daughter deeply, but subtle as he was he did not understand her. His standard of womanhood was different, and he had no ennobling example in his wife; she had been false to him and he had known it, and had used the services of her

Lady Betty and Her Father

lover to smooth his own way with William of Orange, while he himself was vowing fealty to James the Second and walking barefoot, taper in hand, to the chapel royal to be admitted into the Roman communion — a communion he renounced as easily at a convenient season. This daughter who had grown up unlike either parent in simplicity and retirement, this beautiful, spirited, pure-souled creature he did not understand, but he admired her, and after his own fashion he loved her. On the other hand, Lady Betty understood him in many ways more thoroughly than he dreamed; she had a woman's intuitions, and she did not reverence him; his subtlety, his falsehood, his smooth affability did not deceive her; she looked at him with clear eyes, and knew him better than the wise and watchful sovereign whom he served. But she was his daughter and she inherited all his charm of manner, his smooth tongue, his easy address, and he saw it and always smiled upon her.

She came up to him now with a sparkle in her eyes which portended more than he imagined.

"Are you better, sir?" she asked, with solicitude; "your absence from table disturbed me. Was it illness or politics?"

My Lady Clancarty

"Both, Betty," replied the earl smiling; "but you missed me not, you had a younger and a better man in Spencer."

"Faith, sir, I would rather have a worse one," retorted Lady Betty, with a shrug, "such piety and virtue are too much, they overwhelm me. 'Tis a pity that good men are so often bores!"

Sunderland smiled, amusement twinkling in his deep-set eyes.

"I have often found them so, Betty," he admitted; "but Charles is a worthy youth, my dear, and his advice, though often somewhat tedious and long winded, is weighty and merits consideration."

"It may be so," replied the countess, with an arch smile; "but upon my soul, sir, he was so long and loud in braying it at me that I fell to looking at his ears, expecting to see them start up on either side of his head and grow long and pointed. He is tedious!" and her ladyship yawned.

"Brothers often are, Betty," remarked the earl smiling; "you must have other and gayer company. In fact, I was but now planning to send you to Newmarket for the races; Lady Sunderland is there, Spencer is going, and I go presently. You have lived too much in retire-

Lady Betty and Her Father

ment here; you must go to Newmarket and hear gayer talk than the discourses of our young sage."

"I shall be glad to escape the oracle," said the countess; but she glanced searchingly at her father and added quietly, "My retirement becomes me, sir; I am practically a widow."

The earl's expression changed a trifle, but such a trifle that his daughter made little of it.

"We will not refer to that unhappy contract," he said smoothly; "it was an error on my part, Elizabeth, and I assure you I repent it."

"Has Lord Clancarty written to you, father?" she asked, so abruptly that Sunderland started, and for an instant his eye faltered under hers, and he hesitated before he was himself again.

"Never," he said calmly, closing his silver snuff-box and giving the lid a friendly little tap.

His momentary confusion, though, was nearly his undoing; his daughter laid a white hand on his arm.

"He has written you," she said imperiously, "and lately, too!"

"Upon my word, Elizabeth," said the earl frowning, "you go too far."

My Lady Clancarty

"I cannot help it," she cried impetuously. "Have I no rights? Ought it to be concealed from me and confided to my brother, who only taunts me? My husband has written you!"

Sunderland had recovered himself now, however, and smiled calmly at her.

"You are too headstrong, my love," he said smoothly, "too easily suspicious. If Clancarty wrote, why should I conceal it? As you remark, he is your husband in the eyes of the law, but your husband in fact he is not, and trust me, Betty, he is too great a Jacobite to risk himself in England."

"But, father, the Peace of Ryswick has brought many back," she said, "and we all know—it is notorious how easy King William is—and you, you could get Clancarty's pardon a thousand times over, if you would!"

"Hear the child!" said Sunderland, with a gesture of mock despair. "Why, Betty, 't was marvellous hard to get my own, and the politicians hate me so that not even Spencer's devotion to the Whigs appeases that party. Clancarty's pardon!—'t would cost me my liberty and, perhaps, my head."

"Nonsense!" pouted Lady Betty; "you are the king's friend; I will not believe you."

Lady Betty and Her Father

And you might, at least, take thought of me ;
I am his wife."

"O child, child!" laughed Lord Sunderland, "as little his wife as my Lady Devonshire or the Princess Anne. Married to him, through your father's folly, when you were eleven and parted from him on the instant. What virtue is there in such a contract? Be sure, my love, he has in no wise respected it — nor will he while I have my daughter safe with me. Think not of him, Betty! 'T was my folly, but then he possessed large estates in Munster and it promised to be a great match ; for, believe me, I had no thought of tying you to a proscribed and penniless scapegrace."

"Ay," said Lady Betty, with spirit, "he was rich and now he is poor; therefore, my lord, I will not desert him!"

Lord Sunderland laughed, but his eyes did not laugh with him.

"There is no question of desertion, my child," he said smoothly, "you are not his wife, and you never shall be."

"I beg your pardon, sir," retorted the incorrigible countess, "I am his wife, and I will be no other man's."

"Tush!" replied the earl impatiently, "you know not what you say. Go to your apart-

My Lady Clancarty

ment, Elizabeth, and reflect upon the matter until you recollect your duty to me. Here comes Spencer now with some visitors, and I have no more leisure for your childish folly."

But Lady Betty would not be silenced; as she retired toward the door opposite the one that was opening to admit the earl's visitors, she murmured low but distinctly, —

"I am his wife, my lord, and I will be no less," and she swept out with her face aflame and her head high.

She came to the head of the great staircase and stood looking down, gracefully poised, her finger on her lips; a charming figure, musing upon destiny, with the soft candlelight shining down upon her stately young head and her flowing white robes. She began to hum softly to herself the air of "Roseen Dhu."

“And one beaming smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew!
My dark Rosaleen!”

CHAPTER IV

IN THE WOODS OF ALTHORPE

A LTHORPE, called in Domesday Books "Ollethorp," — and held before the Conquest, as the freehold of Tosti and Snorterman, — had been the home of the Spencers since the days of Henry the Seventh, when one John Catesby, second son of John Catesby of Legus Ashby, sold it to John Spencer, Esquire, son of William Spencer of Wormleighton,¹ in Warwickshire, descended from the younger branch of the Despencers, anciently Earls of Gloucester and Winchester, and still more remotely from Ivo, Viscount Constantine, who married Emma, daughter of Alan of Brittany, before the Conquest — coming, therefore, by blood from one of the great feudal lords of France.

Althorpe House was built of freestone, in the form of the letter H, the two long wings joined by a central building in which was the main entrance facing south. It stood in a

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beautiful spot, level and well wooded. The old gatehouse, remnant of the feudal strength of Althorpe, had once been surrounded by a moat, but that had long since run dry and was overgrown with turf as smooth as velvet. The long avenues of elms and beeches and limes ran from it to the very doors of the earl's house, and about it lay the park, enfiladed by those avenues of stately trees, while beyond were the meadows—in the old time it was said that there were eight acres of meadowland and two of thornwood in one small portion of the freehold of Ollethorp—and now the great domain stretched out on every hand, beautified by nature and by art.

It was in the woods of the park that Lady Betty and her attendant, Alice Lynn, walked on the morning after her interview with her father. It was too threatening to set out upon the journey to Newmarket, so they strolled on the outskirts of the earl's domain. Both girls were cloaked and hooded and prepared for rain and, indeed, more than once there was the sharp pattering of drops on the thick foliage overhead. They did not hasten their steps, for neither of them feared the elements, and Lady Betty really feared nothing greatly, being a high-spirited and daring

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young creature who loved adventure well. A fresh breeze began to blow, rustling the leaves, and the branches swayed and creaked above them, a trellis-work of wavering green through which the gray sky blinked occasionally. To the left was a coppice, black with shadows; before them, here and there, a wide vista of open fields showed the grass rippling in a thousand waves; and again the tree-tops that seemed to touch the long, ragged clouds scudding so low, heavy with moisture and torn by wind. And the same wind—grown caressing—tossed the soft locks of Lady Betty's hair into little curls about her face under the yellow bird's-eye hood.

"What have you there, Alice?" she asked, as the girl stooped and peeped into a patch of grass growing in an opening between the trees.

"'Tis but a four-leaved clover, madam," Alice replied, pulling it.

Lady Clancarty took it and looked at it with a quizzical eye.

"There is a saying in Devonshire," she said, "that if you find a four-leaved clover and an even-leaved ash on the same day you will surely see your love ere sundown."

"I have none, my lady," replied Alice demurely.

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Lady Betty laughed with a delicious ripple of merriment.

"You have none, girl?" she said archly. "What a prompt confession! I grow suspicious, Alice, and see, there is the tell-tale blood creeping up to your hair. Fie, girl, fie! Where is thy true love, thine own love now?"

"Indeed, I know not, madam," replied Alice meekly; "no one ever wooed me but the parson, and his mouth was so large that it frightened me; it did open his head like a lid."

"Mercy on us, girl, 't was an opening in life for you," laughed Lady Betty; "and 't is said that a large mouth is generous."

"He was a great eater, madam," replied the handmaid bluntly.

"Then were you surely meant for him, lass, for you are a famous maker of pastries, as I know. But tell me, Alice, did ever you have your fortune told?"

"Nay, 't was not thought seemly by my aunt," replied Alice; "I was reared as strict as any Calvinist."

"And yet live with a sinner," said Lady Clancarty with a smile. "I would inquire my fate, if there be any fortune-teller or sooth-

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sayer near. I grow more curious every day, Alice, to know what the end may be."

"Ignorance is ofttimes best, my lady," quietly replied her attendant.

"It may be," Lady Clancarty said; "but sooth, Alice, 'tis very trying. I would fain know — I would fathom that dark cloud that hangs upon my destiny."

"Dear Lady Betty," Alice said, "is there indeed a dark cloud upon it? It seems to my humble vision fair as summer sunshine, and high and noble."

The mistress sighed. "Ah, simple maid," she said, "look not enviously upon high estate. Light hearted I was born, gay and full of recklessness, I believe, but happy — ah, Alice, once I was! But now, my mind keeps turning ever to the thought of one less happy; I have a home and he — he has none; I have friends — belike, he is friendless. I have money, a dower cut from his estates in Munster; he is a beggar! O Alice, it grieves me; I would fain help him; I would fain give him back my dower; I would — oh, do you not see what I must seem to him? Heartless, cold, without sense of my duty, a robber and an enemy? I who am true, I who have only too kind a heart, I who

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would give my all to help him — what is the song?

‘Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
To heal your many ills!’

Alice, I must know how my husband fares, I — mercy on us, girl, what ails you?” she cried, for Alice had given a scream of alarm, starting back from the coppice near at hand.

“There’s some one there!” cried the handmaid, in agitation, “I saw a man’s boot and spur yonder.”

“Where?” demanded Lady Betty impatiently, “where is your scare-crow, you little simpleton?”

But before Alice could reply a large man emerged from the beeches and advanced toward them. He was clad in a long riding coat of dark blue with deep capes, and his high boots were splashed with mud. As he approached he lifted his wide-brimmed, be-plumed hat, uncovering a head which was striking in contour. His face was of a bold and handsome type and his dark gray eyes were keen; he wore the full, long periwig of the prevailing fashion and a flowing cravat of Flemish lace.

In the Woods of Althorpe

"A likely bugbear, my girl," whispered Lady Betty roguishly, pinching Alice's arm, but turning an innocent face upon the stranger.

"I crave pardon," he said, with an easy salutation, "I have lost my way; will you direct me to Northampton?"

"The town lies five miles from us, sir," replied Lady Betty, "and the tavern of the King's Arms is upon the high street."

"I thank you," he replied courteously, but with no apparent desire to depart, and gazed at Lady Clancarty with an open admiration that offended Alice, who plucked at her mistress' sleeve.

"Will you tell me what place this is?" he added, pointing at Althorpe House.

"It belongs to our master, the Earl of Sunderland," replied Lady Betty, affecting the pert air of a waiting-maid; "'t is a fine place, sir, with a gallery full of pictures and another full of books and books and books! Dear me, sir, a sight of 'em! Your worship should go and look at 'em; 't is a very hospitable house, too, and strangers are made welcome."

"Indeed," he said, with a smile, "I would be glad to avail myself of the opportunity —

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at another season. And you, my pretty maids, are the keeper's daughters?"

"Faith, yes, sir," said Lady Clancarty, dropping a courtesy, "we're twins."

"By Saint Patrick, you are strangely untwin-like!" remarked the stranger frankly; "never saw I two birds from one nest with less resemblance; one a pigeon and the other —"

"What, your honor?" demanded Lady Betty roguishly, while Alice plucked at her skirts in genuine confusion and fear.

"A bird of Paradise," said he gallantly, kissing the tips of his fingers to her.

Lady Betty hung her head, simpering like the veriest country girl.

"Faith, sir," she said, fingering her kerchief, "I don't know what that is. Is it poultry?"

"It has wings, my dear," he replied smiling, "but, in this case, they are only figurative."

"La, sir!" cried Lady Betty, "what's that? It sounds like something strange."

"It's a figure of speech, my girl," he replied, a daring smile in his gray eyes as he drew a step nearer and Betty retreated a step, partly drawn by Alice; "but eyes like stars and cheeks like roses do not belong to the barnyard."

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Her ladyship, suspecting that she had betrayed herself, bridled a little, but her love of mischief kept her from flight.

“Faith!” she said, looking down, “you fine gentlemen talk so finely that a poor maid cannot follow you. Go to the tavern, sir, and there your worship will find a listener after your own heart, for they do say that saucy Polly can talk up to Lord Spencer himself, and he’s the most learned man in England, sir; and, indeed, I do believe that all the others that ever knew half as much died of it immediately and were buried! Go to the tavern, sir, and good cheer to you and good by,” and her ladyship dropped another awkward courtesy.

“Here, lass, a kiss and a crown for your pains,” said the stranger, making a sudden attempt to catch her by the arm.

But Lady Betty danced off as light as a feather, laughing roguishly under her hood.

“Nay, sir,” she said wickedly, “girls do not kiss strangers in this country if they do — in France!”

“Confound the witch!” ejaculated the traveller, with a start of surprise. “Pshaw! ’t was my French coin she saw,” he added, and smiled as he watched the two girlish figures flying through the trees.

My Lady Clancarty

Meanwhile Lady Betty was laughing and Alice remonstrating.

"Oh, my lady, how could you?" she said; "he might recognize you, he might have kissed you!"

"So he might!" admitted Lady Clancarty gleefully, "and how handsome he is! Did you mark him, Alice, is he not handsome?"

"Nay, madam," said the discreet handmaid, still shocked and frightened, "that I know not, but he was overbold in staring at your ladyship."

"Did he so?" asked Lady Betty pensively, blushing in a tell-tale fashion; "I noted it not; but was he not tall and strong and finely framed, Alice, with a bonny gray eye?"

"Oh, comely enough in appearance, my lady, but bold and with a reckless air; I trembled lest he should insult you."

"Pooh, pooh, girl, you would love a milk-sop!" said Lady Betty petulantly; "he has the very eye and front of a soldier. I'll wager he is some gallant who can strike a good blow for his sweetheart. What fun would there be in life without a harmless jest? He took me for a waiting-woman."

"That he did not!" cried Alice, "he knew

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you, take my word for it, and he would have kissed you, the daring wretch !”

The handmaid shuddered at the thought and the mistress laughed at her perturbation, laughed with sweet gayety, her mirth rippling in low, joyous notes.

“You have no eye for a fine man, Alice,” she said blithely ; “you little prude, do you think I would have let him? Nay, then do you not know me ; but ’t was rare fun to see the dare-devil in those gray eyes of his. He has French gold, too, and mercy, how startled he was at my haphazard shot. ’T is some Jacobite, and there are fierce Whigs at Northampton ! Lackaday, the poor gentleman may come into trouble, I must warn him.”

“My lady, my lady,” protested Alice, and then stood aghast. “The saints help us,” she murmured, “there she runs after that bold gallant, like a village lass, and if the earl should see her !”

But generous-hearted Lady Clancarty thought of neither Alice nor the earl. Light of foot as any fawn, she flew over the green after the stranger’s retreating figure, for he had turned in another direction and was leading a black horse by the bridle. The swift run and the excitement of the moment brought the blood

My Lady Clancarty

to Betty's cheeks, and she panted for breath when she overtook him.

He turned with a smile. "What, lass," he said gayly, "hast come for your kiss?"

Lady Clancarty gasped and grew crimson with shame; then drawing herself up to her full height, she flashed at him a look of withering scorn.

"You mistake, sir," she said haughtily, "you are addressing Lady Clancarty."

He took off his hat and the long plumes swept the ground at her feet as he made her a profound obeisance.

"I beseech your ladyship's pardon," he said, graceful and gracious—but not one whit abashed, "my eyes were dazzled—else they would have made no such mistake."

But Betty would not be appeased; like a child who has been naughty and repented, she tried to appear as if it had not been. She was cold and haughty.

"Sir, I would merely warn you to be less careless of your French gold at Northampton," she said; "we do not love St. Germain here," and with a courtesy as low as his bow she left him.

Left him staring after her with a glow in his gray eyes.

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Alice Lynn usually slept in a little anteroom of Lady Betty's bedchamber, and that night as she lay abed she was awakened suddenly. The room was full of moonlight, and in it stood Lady Betty in her night-rail, — a charming figure, with softly dishevelled hair about her shoulders, and eyes that seemed to sparkle in the pale duskiness of her face. The tire-woman started up in alarm.

"My lady, oh, my lady!" she cried, "are you ill? Has aught happened?"

"Hush, no, no!" whispered Lady Betty, with a soft little laugh; "but, Alice, did n't you notice that he said 'by Saint Patrick'?"

"He! Who?" groaned poor Alice sleepily.

"The stranger, little goose!"

"Nay, madam," said the poor handmaid; "I noticed naught but his bold eyes; I was afraid of him."

"Nonsense!" Lady Betty exclaimed with a gesture of impatience; and she tripped lightly to the window and stood looking-out over the moonlit park.

Alice yawned, drawing herself together on the edge of her bed in a crumpled attitude, one pink foot swinging near the floor; she was fairly nodding with sleep. Not so her mistress. Lady Betty brushed the soft hair from her face

My Lady Clancarty

and stood in the moonlight a lovely figure, half revealed and half concealed by thin white draperies.

"I wonder," she said musingly, "if — if Clancarty looks at all like this man?"

"I cannot tell, madam," replied Alice demurely; "but it may be so."

"You rogue!" laughed her mistress, "you would insinuate that two rakes may well resemble each other! Ah, Alice, he is my husband, mind you that, and a woman's husband is not as other men."

"You know him not at all, my lady," yawned Alice, rubbing her eyes, "and if he's like some —"

"Fudge, my girl, what do you know of husbands?" said Betty gayly; "I believe you have never even glanced out of the tail of that blue eye of yours at any bold gallant yet."

The handmaid sighed sleepily.

"'T is better so, my lady," she said meekly.

"The parson not excepted!" laughed Lady Betty, dancing back lightly over the floor and pinching the girl's cheek as she passed.

"Oh! that my hero had his throne,
That Erin's cloud of war were flown,
That proudest prince would own his sway
Over the hills and far away!"

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sang my lady, taking dancing steps as she tripped toward her own door; she was full of gayety, incorrigible and delightful as ever, though the great clock on the stairs was striking twelve. But Alice sighed drearily, and her mistress heard her.

“Poor lass!” she laughed, “go to sleep; I am a heartless wretch,” and she ran off laughing to her room, and Alice sank on her pillows again with a sigh of despair.

CHAPTER V

LADY SUNDERLAND

IT was at night too, a week later, that Lady Betty's coach rumbled up the long street at Newmarket. But no moon shone; instead, the rain came down in torrents and the wind dashed it against the glass windows and rattled and shook the heavy doors, while the horses slipped and floundered, knee deep in mud; the great coach itself lurched heavily out of one huge rut into another, and the postilions, dripping and profane, cracked their whips and shouted. Lady Clancarty and her attendants, Alice Lynn and the woman, Melissa Thurle, bounced about within the vehicle, coming now and then into collision with endless boxes and bundles, a part only of the countess' impedimenta, the most perishable, and therefore gathered within the carriage to save it from the deluge, instead of being strapped on top with the heavier luggage.

Through the moist darkness lights began to twinkle. As they neared the inn these lan-

Lady Sunderland

terns increased in numbers, their yellow radiance dimmed and blurred by the rain but showing in a broad circle of warmth before the tavern door. There, too, the water flooding the kennels had poured out, making a small lake in the courtyard. The coach went splashing into it and halted with muddy water rising to the hubs. The inn door was open, and the hall overflowed with noise and good cheer; lackeys and grooms came bustling at the sound of an arrival; and at the sight of a private carriage, with an earl's crest emblazoned upon the door, mine host himself came hurrying forward but stood aghast at the puddle.

"Here, you varlets," he shouted, clapping his hands, "a plank from the door to the carriage steps, or her ladyship cannot descend."

Her ladyship's roguish face was at the window as he spoke and she watched the men placing a board for her. As they opened the coach door the innkeeper bowed low, his broad back in the air, but stepping carefully on the plank and tottering uneasily, for he was a stout man and in terror of falling headlong into the flood.

"Who have I the honor to serve, my lady?" he inquired, all smiles in spite of his perilous position.

My Lady Clancarty

"Venus rising from the waves, sir," replied Lady Betty flippantly, as she sprang lightly across the improvised bridge, scarcely touching his shoulder with her fingers and quite regardless of his open-mouthed astonishment.

"Look to it that my women are not drowned!" she added imperiously, as he retreated after her, leaving her attendants to climb out unassisted.

But the man was sorely perplexed by her ladyship's announcement of herself, and he only stared at her, trying to place her in the gallery of a fertile brain well stored with great ladies; but this face — albeit one of the most charming he had ever seen — was not among them, and he stared, perhaps a trifle rudely, for Lady Betty's eye, suddenly alighting on him, her chin went up.

"You will show me to my Lady Sunderland's apartments," she said in an icy tone, as she waved her hand toward the stair.

In a moment the innkeeper's supple back bent double again; he threw out his fat hands and stammered a hundred apologies.

"Lady Sunderland did not look for your ladyship until to-morrow," he sputtered, hurrying on ahead, while Lady Clancarty followed, with her chin still scornfully elevated, her two

Lady Sunderland

weary and dishevelled women behind her. "The countess will be rejoiced — we are all rejoiced, your ladyship; the storm was so heavy, the roads so fearful, we scarcely dared to hope that your carriage would reach New-market to-night," continued the host, all smiles again, rubbing his hands and flourishing before her ladyship.

But Lady Betty walked on in silence, scarce glancing at him as he opened a door and, with many flourishes and bows, announced her at the threshold and stood aside, still bowing, to let her pass into a large, well-lighted room, where a bright fire burned upon the hearth, great logs ablaze upon the high, polished brass andirons. The dark wood floor was polished too, reflecting the blaze, and in a great chair by the fire sat a woman past middle age, yet showing little of her years, and dressed in the extreme affectation of a youthful fashion, a petticoat of white brocade, which was short in front to show her feet in white and gold pantoffles, and a bodice and overdress of peachblow satin; a face that had been handsome and was now much rouged, the eyes brightened by dark rings beneath them, while her hair — or her periwig — was frizzed full at the sides after a fashion much in vogue in the time of

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Charles the Second. Her throat was covered with jewels, and her hands and arms; on either side of her stood two young men of fashion, beaux of Newmarket, in gay velvet coats and ruffles of lace, and long curled and scented French periwigs, white satin breeches and silk stockings, and slippers with high red heels, then much in favor at Versailles.

It was a group that amused Lady Clancarty, — the great lady and her two youthful admirers, for Betty knew her mother well. They in their turn stared a little at the traveller's unexpected advent, and for a moment no one spoke. There was a strange contrast between the painted and bejewelled countess and her daughter: Lady Clancarty wore a long, dark riding-coat with capes, her full skirts trailing below the coat, and her hat — a large one with plumes — set over her brows. The cool damp night air had brought the freshness of a rose to her cheeks and her eyes sparkled as she viewed the party by the fire, and made her mother a courtesy.

"I have been in the deluge, madam," she said gayly. "Faith! I had expected to be drowned, but lo! our ark landed here, and here am I — a dove with an olive branch, in fact — for I come with kind messages from Althorpe for your ladyship."

Lady Sunderland

"My dear Betty," said Lady Sunderland, recovering from her amazement, "I am delighted; come and kiss me, my love, and here — my Lord Savile and Mr. Benham, this is my daughter, Lady Elizabeth Spencer."

The young men bowed profoundly, Lord Savile's bold eyes on Lady Betty's face, for he saw it flush with sudden indignation.

"My mother's memory plays her false," she said coldly, scarcely acknowledging their greetings; "I am the Countess of Clancarty."

Lady Sunderland laughed angrily but pretended to be merry.

"The child is foolish about a trifle," she said, winking behind her fan at young Savile. "We can afford to humor her whims, my lord; we will call her Lady Clancarty."

"We shall call her ladyship divine, if she wills it," replied Lord Savile, with a smile at Betty; "it is all one to us as long as she is pleased."

Lady Clancarty's foot tapped the floor impatiently and there was a dangerous sparkle in her eyes. Lady Sunderland observed her uneasily.

"My love, you are tired," she said, mildly solicitous, "sit down and let me send for a cup of tea; Mr. Benham — ah, my lord, thank

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you, yes, the bell — a dish of tea for Lady Spen — Lady Clancarty. There — there, my dear, don't frown at me; it is all quite ridiculous! Mr. Benham will arrange the cushions in that chair for you; I don't know what I should do without him! We were playing gleek, Betty, when you were announced."

Betty was now ensconced in an armchair by the fire, her little feet on the cushion that Mr. Benham had placed for her; and she viewed the situation with an expression more composed.

"Yes, I take tea," she said to Lord Savile, who was handing her a smoking cup, "and what is this?" she added, for he had managed to drop a flower from his buttonhole into her lap with an air of gallantry.

"A poor blossom," he said gracefully, "to compare with such a rose as blooms here to-night."

Lady Betty looked at him and then at the flower curiously.

"Ah," she said calmly sipping her tea, "it is a rose — I thought 't was a thistle!"

Lady Sunderland coughed and dropped her fan and frowned at her daughter; but the incorrigible countess did not glance in her direction. She was smiling blandly at the fire and warming first one foot and then the other.

Lady Sunderland

"You are from Althorpe?" Mr. Benham asked, smiling at the beauty, for he was not displeased at Lord Savile's discomfiture; "and my friend, Spencer, is there now."

"He is indeed," replied Betty, with a sigh, "and may he stay there!" she added mentally; but to Mr. Benham, "Has the king come?"

"He came yesterday, and with him, Lord Albemarle; the Princess Anne is here too, and my Lady Marlborough."

"Dear me," said Lady Betty, with an unconcealed yawn, "the world is here, it seems, and I am so weary that I must crave your ladyship's license to retire."

"Nay," said Mr. Benham gallantly, "it is my lord and I who should retire and permit your ladyship to rest."

"I protest!" cried Lady Sunderland; "the gleek was but half played."

But she made no great effort to detain them; indeed, she wanted an opportunity to speak plainly to her daughter, so the beaux were allowed to bow themselves out, with more than one lingering glance at the beautiful, haughty face by the fireside. No sooner was the door closed, however, than Lady Sunderland turned on her daughter.

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"Your folly passes belief, Elizabeth," she said tartly, quite oblivious of the two attendants quietly waiting in the background; "I am tired of the name of Clancarty; your father and I intend to divorce the rascal. To parade the matter as you do is simply childish, my love, quite childish."

Lady Betty sipped her tea and looked into the fire.

"I am not divorced," she remarked placidly, "and Lord Clancarty, being a Romanist, may object to divorces."

Lady Sunderland laughed unpleasantly, tapping her fan on the arm of her chair.

"Lord Clancarty has probably never respected his marriage," she remarked, in a biting tone, though she smiled; "you are very childish, Elizabeth, for your years."

"I *am* quite advanced," her daughter replied, rising and setting her cup on the table where the cards were scattered, "and perhaps I am too old to think of divorces."

"Nonsense," Lady Sunderland said frowning, "your father and I mean to see you well married when we are rid of this Irish nuisance."

"Indeed," said Lady Betty coldly, elevating her brows, "to whom? My Lord Savile, for instance, or Mr. Benham?"

Lady Sunderland

"You might do worse," retorted Lady Sunderland stiffly; "they are both fine young men and in favor at court."

"Precisely," said Lady Betty, "and 't is strange that my taste is so perverted. Dear madam, I bid you good-night. We will discuss their excellencies later; now I am perishing with sleep," and she dropped her mother a courtesy and slipped out of the room, leaving the older countess frowning and biting her lips, the rouge showing red on her cheeks.

But once alone with Alice Lynn, Betty laughed, with tears shining in her eyes.

"Ah, the trap is set, Alice, dear," she said, "the trap is set, if only this poor little mouse will nibble at the cheese!"

CHAPTER VI

LADY BETTY'S TOILET

NIGHT and the rain departed together. The wind had swept the sky clear, not even a white feather curled there; it was blue — blue as English skies seldom are. Lady Betty, opening her own window shutter, looked up and smiled, and then looked down into the courtyard of the inn. The waters were subsiding, and the uneven flagging showed muddy, wet and glistening in the sunlight. To the left lay the stables, where she could occasionally hear a horse neigh or stamp an impatient foot. To the right the court was railed off by an old balustrade of gray stone, mossy and green with age and opening in the centre with two vases on either side filled with geraniums and mignonette. Between these, steps descended into an old garden, laid out in quaint flower-beds, surrounded with rows of box that hedged in the winding gravel paths and grew high as a man's head. It was Sep-

Lady Betty's Toilet

tember, but many flowers bloomed there besides the roses; though it was but poorly tended at this late season, it was still a spot of beauty for the guests of the tavern to look upon, and there was a restful air about it, a fragrance and quaintness, with the early sunshine on it. It was so early, indeed, that the garden was deserted, and only the stable-boys were stirring and the servants running to and fro across the court engaged in preparations for breakfast. Here and there was a red-coated hostler, and one of these was leading a black horse up and down. The horse had just been unsaddled and was heated from hard riding. There was mud on his flanks, too, which was natural enough after the storm, and there were flecks of foam upon his breast. Lady Betty looked at him long and pensively, noting that the bridle was not of English make; the man, too, who had him, was a stranger, for the other hostlers did not speak to him, and his broad, humorous face and twinkling black eyes were quite un-English. He was a short man, with bowed legs and a bulky frame, plainly dressed as the plainest groom of a gentleman could be, and yet these two, the horse and man, held Lady Betty's attention long — so long, indeed, that she did not notice the soft opening of a

My Lady Clancarty

door, or the soft tread on the floor behind her, and started to find Melissa Thurle at her elbow.

The woman had a smooth face and pale eyes that squinted like those of a near-sighted person, though she was not short-sighted. She moved, too, as softly as a cat, and her manners were always apologetic, humbly ingratiating; she cringed a little now under Lady Betty's eye.

"Where is Alice?" Lady Clancarty demanded sharply.

"Her ladyship, your mother, sent for her," Melissa said gently; "her tirewoman is ill to-day, and Lady Sunderland sent to your rooms for one."

"Why did Alice go?" asked Lady Betty imperiously. "You know you cannot do my hair; besides, you would suit my mother exactly. Why did you stay here?"

Melissa looked down meekly. "My lady, the countess sent for Alice Lynn," she replied.

Lady Betty's brows went up. "Strange," she remarked; "we all know that she will not be up until eleven, — why Alice now? I cannot do without Alice."

"I will do my best, my lady," Melissa said, with a deprecating purr; "if you will but choose

Lady Betty's Toilet

your costume for the races I can surely arrange everything for you quite as well as Alice, and indeed your ladyship needs no very skilful tirewoman ; where there is so much beauty there is no need for much skill."

Betty eyed the woman with a distinct feeling of repugnance and yet thought herself unjust.

"Go fetch me a dish of tea," she said languidly, "and I will think about to-day. Dear me, what a bore it is to wear clothes ; if only one had feathers !"

Melissa stared but went to fetch the tea, a luxury much affected by the rich, for tea-drinking came into fashion at the East India houses in the time of Charles the Second.

Lady Betty did not wish the tea ; however, she wanted to be rid of Melissa, and she went back to the window and looked out eagerly. The black horse and groom were both gone, and she turned away disappointed.

Two hours later, Alice being still with Lady Sunderland, Melissa Thurle dressed Lady Clancarty for the gala day at the Newmarket races. And a wonderful work it was to dress a belle in those days of brocaded farthingales and long, narrow-waisted bodices, and heads covered with many waves and puffs and ringlets. It was not then the fashion to powder the hair,

My Lady Clancarty

and Lady Betty's beautiful glossy black tresses curled naturally, so that Melissa's task was not the most difficult. The mass of soft, wavy hair was knotted low on the back of the head and escaped in curls about the brow and cheeks and fell upon the neck, while one or two black patches on brow and cheek were supposed to enhance the whiteness of the complexion. Melissa was skilful enough, in spite of her mistress' prejudices, and her deft fingers arranged the curls, letting some escape in coquettish waves and ringlets and binding others back into the loose knot, which still allowed them to ripple in a lovely confusion.

Lady Betty sat, meanwhile, before a dressing-table, furnished with a small oval glass in which she could not only watch Melissa, but could observe, also, every curve and dimple of her own charming face. Whether its reflection really satisfied her, or she had other and more fruitful sources of content, can only be conjectured, but certain it is that she smiled a little and bore the tirewoman's deft touches with apparent complacence. Melissa, encouraged by her expression, began to talk to her in a soft purring fashion as she worked.

"The house is full, my lady," she said, "'t is all agog below stairs now, and 't is said

Lady Betty's Toilet

there are two dukes, an earl, and five baronets under this roof, besides the countess and your ladyship."

"Dear me," said Lady Betty, "who are all these great people, and when did they come?"

"The Duke of Bedford has been here two days, my lady," replied the newscarrrier, "and the Duke of Ormond came yesterday; Mr. Godolphin, too, and Lord Wharton, — the others? — I know not when they came."

"Who came this morning?" asked her mistress carelessly, at the same moment turning her head to admire a new knot that Melissa had made of her hair.

The tirewoman stopped, comb in hand, and admired too, her narrow eyes more narrow than usual.

"This morning?" she repeated thoughtfully, "I cannot think, — oh, yes, one of the housemaids told me that a stranger came late, on a black horse that he had ridden hard."

Lady Clancarty listened attentively, forgetting to appear indifferent, and unconscious of the peculiar vigilance of Melissa's pale eyes.

"The horse was in the yard this morning and showed hard riding," she said thoughtfully. "Who was the stranger, Melissa?"

My Lady Clancarty

“’T is said he is a horse jockey from London,” purred the tirewoman.

Her mistress darted a searching look at her but read nothing in that smooth face that was by nature as placid as a platter.

“Bring me my pale blue paduasoy petticoat, Thurle,” Lady Betty said, sharply imperious, “and my white and silver brocaded gown, and the mantle of silver lace, and my hat with the white plumes. Do you not know how to fasten a petticoat? — there — so! — and, stupid, my white silk stockings with the blue clocks, and the French slippers with blue enamel buckles,” and she made the woman fetch garment after garment with alacrity, and the glow in her cheeks would have warned even a less observant person than Melissa that Lady Clancarty was out of temper.

But the woman’s smooth manner remained unruffled, and not even angry words made her fingers quiver. She arrayed Lady Clancarty from head to foot, deftly and swiftly, and when the task was completed, and the beauty looked at her own reflection, a smile was forced to play about her lips, for never had a mirror reflected a vision more charming. Lady Betty, with her rich coloring, her full white throat, her perfect form, clad in a marvellous gown of

Lady Betty's Toilet

white and silver, ruffled and ruffled with lace, and looped up at one side a little to show the blue petticoat; open, too, to show a neck as white as snow,—and arms to match were half revealed by the elbow sleeves, while her hat cast a shadow on those sparkling eyes. She gave the vision a look and then turned and motioned Melissa away.

“You have done very well, Thurle,” she said calmly, “and now you may go — ah, here is Alice!” and she relented at the sight of her favorite attendant.

Melissa, meanwhile, humble as usual, courtesied and withdrew, but not without casting a lingering look behind her.

When the door closed, Lady Betty gave her gown a few touches, turning around before the mirror again.

“Will I do, Alice?” she asked.

“Supremely well, madam,” Alice replied soberly, standing off to view her with a critical eye.

Lady Betty turned suddenly and laid her hand on the girl's shoulder.

“Hast said thy catechism, Alice?” she asked.

The handmaid looked up at her blankly, her slower mind struggling to understand.

My Lady Clancarty

“What, my lady?”

“Your catechism, goosie,” repeated Lady Clancarty laughing; “did not my mother question you close of me?”

“She did, madam,” retorted Alice bluntly, with an ingenuous blush, “she asked me many questions.”

“And what answer did you give?” asked her mistress smiling.

“Truthful answers, dear Lady Betty,” Alice replied earnestly, apparently much troubled, “save when I answered not at all.”

“You did not answer!” exclaimed her mistress, in surprise, “and wherefore?”

“Because she asked me what you said to me of—of my Lord Clancarty,” stammered Alice, “and, madam, that I will not tell!”

Betty laughed and blushed, and suddenly she kissed the girl.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE RACES

THERE was no finer race-course in the country in those days than the long heath at Newmarket, and there for years the court of England kept festival. Charles the Second came there, with a train of gay and dissolute courtiers and fair, frail women; there too came the more solemn James with much the same following, if a more decorous manner prevailed, and there came that silent, collected, small man, whose body so little expressed his soul, — one of the greatest men of his time, — William the Third.

The king came to his summer palace, and the great lords kept up their state about him. Euston was famed for the balls of my Lord Arlington in the days of Charles the Second, and times were little changed in that respect. In contrast to the courtly splendor, the heath was fringed with an encampment as gay and varied as any gypsy gathering. Here were

My Lady Clancarty

people of all conditions: gypsies, in fact, in their gay raiment, telling fortunes on the edge of the throng, strolling players, dancing bears and merry Andrews, and the farmers' families come as to a festival to see the stream of fashion. For here were all the great; even the cock-pit at noon was surrounded by stars and ribbons, and there were hunting and hawking and riding. There too were the long gowns and black caps of the University dons, so well received by William, mingling with the motley throng. The world, melted down into this little space, throbbed and bubbled like a cauldron filled and boiling over, and never paused except for the sermon on a Sunday.

At midday when the king went to the race-course all Newmarket streamed out at his heels, from the highest peers and greatest courtiers to the pickpockets of London; from my Lord of Devonshire to Captain Dick the horse jockey; from an orange girl of Drury Lane to the Princess of Denmark; the high and the low, the rich man and the cutpurse, all were there, and in that mass of many-colored costumes, like a bed of King William's tulips at Loo, there were a thousand emotions, — hopes, fears, hatreds, and ambitions. Money flowed like water, and wagers ran high; fortunes were

At the Races

made and unmade, and the faces of men and women had often the tense expression of the gambler. But whatever evil was there — and much there was — was hidden under an air of jollity, and the setting of the scene was as variegated as a rainbow.

The long course was cleared for the horses, and on either side, and especially about the pavilion of the king, the crowd was packed close, palpitating and murmuring in the sunshine, white and pink, blue and crimson, green and gold, ribbon upon ribbon of color, men and women vying with each other in the brilliant beauty and richness of apparel; and behind, the great emblazoned coaches — drawn usually by Flanders horses — stood tier upon tier, sometimes empty, when their owners were promenading, sometimes brimful of lovely smiling faces and fluttering fans; and beyond these, the farmers and teamsters, gypsies and tipsters, honest men and thieves. Meanwhile the jockeys rode their horses out upon the turf for exercise and inspection; no people loved a fine horse better than the English, and it put the throng in an excellent humor.

In the midst of the satins and velvets, gold lace and jewels, one small man was plainly dressed in dark colors with a star upon his breast, — a

My Lady Clancarty

man with a pale, dark face and sparkling dark eyes. Every head was bared before him, and every great dame there courtesied almost to the ground, and the trumpets sounded as King William took his place. The warm September air was filled with the hum of many voices, the trampling of horses, the blare of military music, and the great races began when the king quietly waved his hand.

Lady Sunderland kept her seat in her own carriage, and all the old beaux of the court came there to pay their compliments and exchange rare morsels of gossip with her ladyship, whose wit was keen as her tongue was merciless. But Lady Clancarty was not of this party. She had left her seat in the gorgeously emblazoned coach, and escorted by my Lord of Devonshire himself, she made her way nearer to the scene of action. Though she had lived much at Althorpe, Lady Clancarty was not unknown, and she was greeted on every hand as she passed. Her beauty, her winning address, the place her father occupied in the king's favor, made her at once the cynosure of all eyes. Old beaux and young ones crowded forward for an introduction. Devonshire stood near her, Ormond and Bedford joined her coterie; in fact, in two hours Lady Betty was the belle of

At the Races

Newmarket. She looked about her smiling, roguish, keenly amused, and everywhere she read approbation and admiration, not only in the faces that she knew, but in the strange ones. Everywhere men paid her homage; over there the courtiers of the Princess Anne were thinning out; the circle of my Lady Marlborough grew narrower, but Lady Betty's extended like a whirlpool. In the midst of her little triumph, she saw a tall man coming toward her, singling her out amidst all the others; his dress was plain and his periwig was of a different fashion, but she could not mistake that eye or that bearing; she had seen both in the woods of Althorpe. In a moment more he was bowing before her, and Ormond introduced him.

"My dear Lady Betty, let me present another admirer, Mr. Richard Trevor; an Irishman as I would have your ladyship know," the duke added in her ear, with a laugh.

Lady Clancarty courtesied, casting a roguish look at the stranger.

"Faith, we have met before, my lord," she said, and laughed softly.

"Twice before, my lady," corrected Mr. Trevor, smiling into her eyes.

Betty stared. "Once, sir," she said.

My Lady Clancarty

“As you will, Lady Clancarty,” he replied, and smiled again, the dare-devil leaping up in his gray eyes — and Betty blushed.

At the moment Lord Savile came up with Mr. Benham.

“Are you betting, Savile?” asked the Duke of Devonshire, with a smiling glance at the young man.

Savile made a wry face.

“Confound it, my lord, I’ve lost fifty pounds on my mare, Lady Clara,” he said, “and Benham here has made a hundred on that little black mare of Godolphin’s, — the devil’s in it.”

“Ah, look at them!” cried Betty, pointing at the track, “they come flying like birds. Is that your black mare in the lead, Mr. Benham?”

“I’ll hang for it, if he has n’t won again,” ejaculated Lord Savile, as they leaned forward to watch the squad of horses coming in on the home stretch.

There could scarcely be a finer sight: the smooth turf, the shimmer of sunshine, the beautiful animals running fleetly, for the joy of it, heads out, eyes flashing fire, foam on the lips, and manes flying, while the jockeys, like knots of color, hung low over their necks.

At the Races

The sharp clip of steel-shod feet, a stream of color, sparks flying, and they were past, going on to the stakes, while silence fell on the great throng of people ; men scarcely breathed, every eye strained after them. Then suddenly a shout of exultation and despair, strangely mingled, and the whole crowd blossoming out into a mass of waving handkerchiefs and tossing hats.

“ Ah, was there ever anything so pretty ! ” cried Lady Betty ; “ there is nothing finer than a beautiful horse.”

“ Except a beautiful woman,” said my Lord of Ormond gallantly.

“ Pray, my lord, do not put us in the same category,” said Lady Betty laughing ; “ ’tis said that some men rate their horses dearer than their wives.”

“ That is because there are so few Lady Clancartys,” replied Ormond smiling, and Betty swept him a courtesy.

“ Benham ’s won again,” remarked Savile, too chagrined to notice anything else.

“ And so have I,” said Mr. Trevor, with a little smile ; “ ’t is an ill wind that blows nobody good.”

Savile eyed him from head to foot ; his quick ear had detected a peculiarity of voice and accent.

My Lady Clancarty

"Are you from Ireland, sir?" he asked insolently.

"Where gentlemen are bred,—yes, my lord," replied Trevor, his gray eyes gleaming like steel.

Lady Betty stirred uneasily. "Whose horse was that which came in last?" she asked.

"Savile's," laughed Benham, "don't you see his brow of thunder?"

"Hard luck, my boy," remarked Lord Devonshire, smiling, "but there are many here who will have worse to-day."

"Ay, and the king's cough is worse," remarked Ormond significantly.

"Dr. Radcliffe told him that he would not have his two legs for his three kingdoms," said Lord Savile, with a sullen laugh.

Devonshire smiled a little and so did Ormond, but Lady Betty looked straight before her over the sunny turf.

"My Lord Savile," she said, "the king has the wisest head in Europe."

"A king is richest in the hearts that love him," said Richard Trevor smoothly, "and the King of England is rich in these."

Lady Betty darted a quick glance at him, and so did my Lord of Ormond, but they read nothing. It was a handsome, daring face, with

At the Races

gray eyes and thin lips,—a face to fear in anger.

“There are riddles and innuendoes everywhere,” remarked Lord Savile with a shrug; “one knows not how to read them.”

“What I say, I am quite ready to explain, my lord,” Trevor replied smiling, his eyes hard as flint.

As he spoke my Lady Sunderland came up from her carriage, and with her two other dames of fashion. In the stir and flutter of their entrance, Lady Betty and the two young men, Trevor and Lord Savile, were, to all intents and purposes, alone, and she was perforce a listener to their talk, which was by no means friendly.

Lord Savile thrust his hands into his pockets.

“What flowers bloom at Saint Germain, sir?” he asked, with a drawl.

“The poppies of Neerwinden, I am told,” replied the Irishman.

Lord Savile’s face turned scarlet. “A very vile joke, sir,” he said, in a low voice, “and one you may repent of—here!”

“When I am in the society of informers—it may be so,” replied Trevor haughtily and very low, intending it only for my lord’s ear, but Lady Betty heard it.

My Lady Clancarty

"I would fain walk a little way," she said suddenly, turning on them, "they will not race again for half an hour, and I feel the heat here. My Lord Savile, will you make way for me through the crowd?"

"I will, my lady," Trevor said, offering his arm.

"Nay, sir," retorted Savile, "I am the lady's friend, not you."

Trevor noticed him as little as a poodle; he still smiled and offered his hand to Lady Betty.

"Lady Clancarty will choose, sir, not you," he said contemptuously.

"Lady Clancarty will go with me," cried Savile, hotly and authoritatively.

"Faith, she will not, sir," said Betty laughing; "Lady Clancarty will be commanded by none, my lord, and Mr. Trevor will do her this small service. But there are my thanks for your kindness."

And she courtesied prettily before she laid her hand lightly on the stranger's arm and moved at his side through the throng toward the open heath beyond. Their progress was necessarily slow, and followed by many admiring glances, for the roses had deepened in Lady Betty's cheeks. The tall Irishman be-

At the Races

side her was no less a striking figure; his height and proportions, the clean-cut face, steel-gray eyes, and close-shut thin lips had a history of their own; no one could doubt it.

As for Lord Savile, he stood fuming and vowing vengeance on the cursed Irish Jacobite, as he was pleased to name his rival; if a stanch Whig hated any man, by instinct, he must needs be a Papist and a Jacobite.

CHAPTER VIII

LADY BETTY AND AN IRISH JACOBITE

LADY BETTY and her companion walked on. The crowd, still huzzaing and noisy about the victors, was dropped behind them, all its gorgeous colors knotted into one huge rosette upon the track ; beyond were green meadows and the blue shadows of a grove of limes. The two walked slowly, Lady Betty a little in advance, her long skirts gathered in one hand, the other holding her fan, the sun and the breeze kissing the soft curves of her cheeks. Beside her, holding his hat behind his back, was Richard Trevor, his eyes on her, while hers were on the landscape ; the long, level stretch of turf, the grove of limes, and farther off—veiled in golden mist—the wavy outlines of forest and hills. Above, the sky was blue—blue as larkspur ; the air was sweet too, as if the fragrance of flowers floated on the soft September breeze. A flock of pigeons, with the whir of

Lady Betty and an Irish Jacobite

many wings, rose from the ground as Betty approached, and she looked up after them and sighed.

"Is it true that the French king wears red heels to his shoes?" she asked suddenly and quite irrelevantly.

Mr. Trevor started perceptibly, giving her a quizzical glance.

"They are frequently purple," he replied, with perfect gravity.

"Because, I suppose, it is a royal color," she remarked absently; "you are a Jacobite, Mr. Trevor."

"Either my disguise is a flimsy one, or your penetration is great, Lady Clancarty," he replied, with a whimsical smile; "but I'll swear I'm not alone at Newmarket."

Lady Betty elevated her brows a little.

"It has been frequently hinted that King William was one," she remarked tranquilly.

"By the Whigs out of office," he said, with a short, hard laugh; "he is not counted one on the Continent."

"Or in Ireland," she said; "you were at Londonderry, of course."

"There were two sides to the wall at Londonderry, my lady," he replied; "I was on one — I'll admit that."

My Lady Clancarty

"It is safe not to be explicit," she said smiling; "you are an Irishman, a Papist, and a Jacobite," she told off each point on her fingers, "and you are from Munster."

"Precisely," said Mr. Trevor, with great composure; "you have nailed me to the wall, madam; I am a sinner of the blackest dye, a subject for the gallows."

"So I supposed," she said cheerfully, nodding her head at him, "and being all these things, and from the Continent, can you tell me—" for the first time she hesitated, stopped short, looking at the turf under her daintily shod feet, her face crimson.

He waited, smiling, composed, watchful; not helping her by a word or sign, and she could not read his eyes when she looked into them.

"Do you know Lord Clancarty?" she asked bluntly.

He took time to consider, studying, meanwhile, every detail of her charming, ingenuous face and perfect figure.

"I have met him," he said deliberately, "in Dublin and in Paris." Betty's agitation was quite apparent, but she commanded herself and looked up bravely.

"He is my husband," she said simply.

Lady Betty and an Irish Jacobite

Mr. Trevor smiled involuntarily.

"He is a happy man," he said gallantly.

She made an impatient gesture, laughing and blushing.

"Tell me how he looks?" she asked; "I have never seen him since he was fifteen and I eleven. Is he a bugbear? They would have me believe so."

"On the contrary, I have always thought him handsome, my lady," Mr. Trevor said, smiling imperturbably, "and altogether the most companionable man I know."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed; "yet you told me you had only met him — twice."

"In two places," corrected Mr. Trevor quite unmoved, "but frequently. He's a fine man, madam, take my word for it; I love him like a brother; he has only one fault, madam, one sin, and that, I'll admit, is unpardonable."

"And that?" she queried, with uplifted brows, a little haughtily.

"And that," replied Mr. Trevor calmly, "is the fact that he has been able to live for fourteen years without his wife."

Lady Clancarty flushed angrily, and then she laughed that delicious, mirthful laugh of hers.

My Lady Clancarty

"He has existed, sir," she corrected him, "because he never knew how delightful Lady Clancarty is."

"Exactly," replied Trevor, "a mere existence; life uncrowned by love—such love as he ought to have won, confound him—is not life. He might as well be a turnip."

"So I have always thought," she replied, with a charming smile; "but then, you know, Mr. Trevor, he might not have been able to win it."

"Not win it!" he exclaimed, "not win it, when he is a husband to begin with. By Saint Patrick, madam, I'd cut his acquaintance for life! Not win it? What cannot a man do under the inspiration of a beautiful and noble woman? Kingdoms have been won and lost for them. If Troy fell for Helen, an empire might well fall for a woman as beautiful and far more womanly. I'd run Clancarty through, my lady, if he were not willing to die for his true love. Irishmen are not made of such poor stuff. No, no, he would win it, never fear."

Lady Betty's chin was up and her eyes travelling over the green turf again.

"An idle boast, sir," she said carelessly; "no woman would be lightly won after years of neglect."

Lady Betty and an Irish Jacobite

“Nor should be,” he replied, in a deep tone of emotion, “nor should be! By the Virgin, Clancarty ought to go on his knees from Munster to Althorpe in penitence.”

“Faith, what would he do about the Channel, Mr. Trevor?” she asked wickedly.

“Swim it, madam,” he replied promptly; “a true man and a lover would not drown — with such a saint enshrined before him.”

“A Protestant saint for a Papist penitent,” remarked Lady Betty smiling; “what a poor consolation.”

“Love laughs at obstacles, my Lady Clancarty,” said Mr. Trevor, “and it forgets creed.”

“Oh!” she said and her brows went up.

“There is one excuse, though,” he went on, “one — or I would never speak to Donough Macarthy again.”

“Oh, there is one, then?” she asked doubtfully.

“One — yes,” he replied gravely; “he is a proscribed exile, madam, this king of yours has excepted him from the Act of Grace; he cannot return except, indeed, to the Tower and the block. But, after all, to lose a head is less than to lose a heart.”

Lady Betty laughed.

My Lady Clancarty

"Only one can recover a heart," she said wickedly, "but a head — I never heard of one that was put on after the headsman."

"Nor I," he admitted, "but, after all, one can die but once."

"And one can love many times," suggested Betty; "I have heard that my Lord Clancarty's heart is tender."

"Mere fables, madam," he replied, with cool mendacity; "his heart is made for one image only and would keep that — to eternity."

"His must be a valuable and rare heart," Lady Clancarty remarked demurely, "too good, sir, to exchange for a human one."

"Verily too good to give without a fair exchange, madam," he replied, smiling audaciously; "nor will Clancarty cast it by the wayside. I know him for a man who will love and be loved again. He's no moonstruck youth, my lady; when he gives he will demand a return."

She carried her head proudly. "He should have to win it," she said.

"He would win it," Trevor retorted boldly, "and he would hold it. Pshaw, madam, I despise a milksop, and so do you!"

"You are overbold in your assertions, sir," Betty said, stopping short and looking back

Lady Betty and an Irish Jacobite

over the heath, shading her eyes with her fan.

“Bold for a friend, my lady,” he said gracefully, “bold for the absent who has none to plead his cause.”

Lady Betty laughed.

“Do you see that whirling, frantic thing yonder?” she asked, pointing; “’t is my Lady Sunderland’s India shawl; she is waving to me. We must go back, sir; she thinks I venture too near the lions.”

“We must go back, it seems, since you command it,” he replied regretfully, “but I may see Lady Clancarty again? I may speak to her of—her husband?”

Betty hesitated for the twentieth part of a second and then she smiled.

“We are at the Lion’s Head,” she said, “and I shall receive my friends after supper—but do not talk of Lord Clancarty.”

He bowed profoundly, and she moved on, for the India shawl was waving frantically now and Savile and the others were coming toward them.

“I thank you for the privilege,” said Richard Trevor with his daring smile; “we will talk of Lady Clancarty.”

But Betty answered not a word; she walked

My Lady Clancarty

back across the heath, proudly silent, nor did she cast a single relenting glance behind her — and thus failed to see the quizzical expression in his eyes.

CHAPTER IX

THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

THAT night was the night of Devonshire's great ball and all Newmarket was agog, streets were blocked with fours and sixes — the great coaches jammed in rows, with fighting, swearing coachmen and postilions. As for the chairs, they were blocked in so closely that half the chairmen had black eyes or bloody noses in the morning ; and the link-boys, let loose in this carnival, ran hither and yon, with their lanthorns flaring in the wind like ministering imps in an inferno, while the country people and the tavern tipsters and the market women filled up the last crevices, to see beauty and fashion pass in and out the flaring doorway, whence came strains of music and the sounds of laughter. The king, it was true, would not be there ; his cough — or despatches from France, it was whispered — would keep him in bed that festive night, but Lady Marlborough was there and in her train the

My Lady Clancarty

Princess Anne. People had begun already to put the pair in this sequence, and laughed, in their sleeves, at it and at William's tolerance, for no one despised my Lord Marlborough more than that astute, cool-headed monarch, who knew him to be as false as he was brilliant.

Excepting only the king himself, the whole world of fashion was at the ball, and the house was dressed with green boughs and flowers, rushes and sweet seg, and a wassail bowl stood in the hall wreathed with blossoms. The band was stationed on the staircase landing, the musicians clad for the occasion in scarlet waistcoats and shorts, deep clocked scarlet stockings, and coats of yellow velvet stamped on the back with red roses and on the left breast with the Devonshire arms. There were female attendants, too, attired quaintly in gay flowered silks and wearing vizards, who served the fyne of pocras, sobyll bere and mum below stairs, while above the rooms were lighted by flambeaux and the floors polished like mirrors for the dancers. There were to be dances of every sort, from the country romp, "cuckolds all awry," with "hoite come toite," and the more stately galliard, to "Trenchemore" and the cushion dance and "tolly polly."

The Wearing of the Green

Her Grace of Marlborough, in towering headdress and a gown of red velvet over a petticoat of cloth of gold, led the first dance with his Grace of Devonshire, the Princess Anne and the duke being *vis-à-vis*, but only a poor spectacle by comparison.

The whole house overflowed with the throng. The greatest of the court were there, Bedford and Ormond and Hartington, — and there, too, were Godolphin and Somers and a bevy of beauty; ruffles of lace and gleams of jewels, and here and there the rosy cheeks of the daughters of the country squires. Old dames looked on from the wall, smiling and delighted when a daughter danced and frowning at a more favored neighbor, and the young beaux had no rest, but danced in their tight French shoes and bowed until their backs were doubled.

But the greatest stir was when Lady Clancarty led the galliard with her noble host, my lady all in white and gold, with one pink rose in her hair, her eyes shining, and her cheeks fresher than the rose. Down the long room they came and her feet scarcely seemed to touch the floor, and she held her head so high that it almost overlooked his grace, who bowed smilingly toward her, a stately figure himself

My Lady Clancarty

as he moved in his splendid dress down the space left by the dancers, the music scarcely drowning the murmur of applause. Her Grace of Marlborough was outshone and she bit her lip and tossed her head.

It was after this, when my Lady Clancarty, flushed and lovely, stood surrounded by a throng that the Irishman, Mr. Trevor, pushed through them all to her side. A handsome figure, too, and one which had won more than one admiring glance that night; a graceful figure clad in white satin, self-possessed, accomplished. French in manner; he had caught the trick at Versailles, and his gray eyes looked straight into hers. The strains of the dance floated up the stairs; my Lord Savile pressed forward.

“Our dance, my lady,” he said, almost imperatively thrusting between.

For an instant she hesitated and then she smiled and laid her hand in Mr. Trevor’s, so near that it brushed Savile’s sleeve.

“This dance is promised, my lord,” she said sweetly, and passed out on the floor with her partner.

The young lord swore in a subdued voice, happily unheard by any one. All eyes were on my lady and her partner.

The Wearing of the Green

"What a pair!" they murmured.

"Mars and Venus!" cried a courtier.

"Venus and Apollo!" said another, and every eye was on them.

Yet the two thought not of it, they danced superbly, it is true, and with a joy in it, being adepts in the art, but Betty could think of no one but the man who held her hand, whose eyes held hers, too, by a spell. Perhaps, she feared a little the mastery of his ways, yet she had never danced before with such a partner.

"You have learned to dance in France, sir, I think," she said lightly, laughing a little.

"Perhaps," he replied, smiling too, "but I think I learned on the mossy fields of old Ireland, that I was born a dancer."

Afterwards they went out on the balcony together, the night air cooling their faces. Below was the garden, for this was the rear of the house. It was dark and silent without, but the strains of music floated through the open windows and the light from within fell on her.

He took something from his breast and pressing it to his lips, held it out to her.

"Will you wear it, my lady," he said softly, "the symbol of an unfortunate country and — of a loyal heart?"

My-Lady Clancarty

She looked at it strangely, it was a piece of shamrock. Perhaps she meant to refuse it, but she saw Savile coming and a malicious imp leaped into her eyes. She took it and tried to fasten it in her hair but her fingers faltered, and Savile drew nearer; the music, too, heralded another dance.

"Permit me," said Richard Trevor, and deftly fastened the shamrock where the rose had been, that slipped and fell between them on the floor.

Lady Clancarty's face was crimson. Trevor knelt on one knee and taking up the rose kissed it.

"A fair exchange," he said.

She bit her lip and stretched out her hand to snatch the flower.

"You will dance with me now, my lady?" said Lord Savile.

"You were long in coming," replied her ladyship wickedly, with mock eagerness, but not without a backward glance to see the effect of it; but the coquette was disappointed.

At her words, the Irishman let her flower lie where it had fallen, and in a few minutes she saw him dancing with the pretty daughter of a country squire. Lady Clancarty liked it so little that she set her teeth on her lip and

The Wearing of the Green

gave my Lord Savile a bit of her temper. Yet she wore the shamrock, though half the room began to comment upon it.

It was morning when the great rout broke up and the stream of coaches began to move again. The crowd had stayed; they knew my lord duke's generosity and that the broken meats from that fête would keep them for a sevensnight, and they waited to pour at last into the kitchenway and come out heavy-laden; they were there when the great people went away in their coaches and chairs.

Lady Sunderland was already in her chair and her daughter was coming down the stair with a throng of followers, but it was Richard Trevor who walked beside her.

"The rose I would not take from the ground," he whispered, "I am no beggar of crumbs — but the shamrock —"

She smiled and her bright eyes looked beyond him at the throng below.

"The shamrock!" he murmured.

It was not in her hair; had she thrown it away? A step lower down and she held out her hand and dropped the sprig into his.

"A poor thing, sir, but 't is yours," she said, "and you were long in claiming it," she added, laughing softly.

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At the moment a wreath of flowers, cast from the balcony above, fell lightly on her shoulders, and she stood laughing, the petals showering her and falling all about her feet.

He kissed her finger tips gallantly.

“The Queen of the Rout is crowned!” he said.

CHAPTER X

AN IRISH DEFIANCE

MELISSA stood meekly before her mistress.

“My Lady Sunderland’s compliments, madam,” she said, with her usual purr; “will you play basset to-night?”

“No,” replied Lady Clancarty; “many thanks; but tell my mother that I am to have guests, and my purse is too thin for basset.”

As the door closed on Melissa, Lady Clancarty rose from her dressing-table.

“I will wear the pink flowered brocade, Alice,” she said.

Alice opened her eyes. “Oh, my lady,” she remonstrated, “it is too lovely; I thought you meant it only for the king’s levees.”

Her mistress smiled. “May not the king come here — if he chooses?” she said mischievously. “The brocade, Alice.”

Unconvinced, Alice brought the garment, a beautiful and costly thing frosted with rare

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lace, and as she helped Lady Betty put it on she was more and more impressed with its charms.

"Oh, my lady," she murmured, "you do look lovely in it — 't is too fine by half."

Betty craned her neck backward, looking over her shoulder into the glass; the folds of the sheeny satin fell about her, the bodice fitted like a glove, displaying every curve of her well-rounded form, and it was low cut, revealing a neck and shoulders like snow. The beauty smiled.

"Bring me my string of pearls," she said.

Alice brought them without a word and helped her fasten them about her throat. Betty looked into the mirror again and then fell to fingering the bracelet on one round arm.

"Alice," she said, half laughing, "he is here."

The handmaid started, looking at her in wonder.

"Who, my lady? — not Lord Clancarty?"

"The stranger we met in the woods at Althorpe," her mistress replied, "who would have kissed me for a milkmaid."

"Indeed, madam, I think he would as lief kiss you as a queen," Alice said blushing, "the bold gallant! He is here — and who is he?"

An Irish Defiance

Lady Clancarty clasped and unclasped her bracelet while the roses deepened in her cheeks.

"He is called Richard Trevor," she said softly; "a pretty name, Alice, Richard — rich-hearted, lion-hearted — like our great Plantagenet."

Alice looked at her in bewilderment. Lady Betty had as many moods as April: did she mean to fall in love, at last, after all her loyalty to that unknown and terrible exile? Alice wondered. But saying nothing she stooped down, instead, to smooth the shining folds of the beautiful gown.

"Go fix the candles, Alice," Lady Clancarty said, with a soft little sigh, "and place a table for cards — and the lute and guitar — place them there also. Presently my guests will be here."

The handmaid obeyed, too perplexed by this new mood of my lady's to venture on the smallest observation. She had arranged the room with simple taste when Lady Betty entered it a few moments later. It was not as large a room as her mother's, but it was furnished, too, with an open fireplace where a single log burned, for the nights were chilly. Candles were set on the mantel and the table, while through the open door came the buzz

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of conversation, for Lady Sunderland was deep in a game of basset with Lady Dacres and his Grace of Bedford. Betty did not disturb them but observed them from a distance, noticing her mother's rouged face and nodding headdress, and Lady Dacres's pinched and eager features. The old dame was as keen as any gamester. The mother and daughter had so little in common that they seemed like strangers, and the younger countess stood looking at the log in deep thought when Richard Trevor was announced. As she courtesied, she gave him a quick, keen glance, but made nothing of that bold handsome face of his, though quick to note the distinction of his appearance and bearing, those of a man used to courts as well as camps. She saw it all at a glance, as she had seen it at first, but she chose to receive him with cool politeness.

"You play basset, of course, sir?" she said demurely.

But he saw the pitfall.

"I'm too poor, madam," he replied smiling. "I can remember hearing an old courtier tell how he lost his fortune to King Charles at basset."

"I trust the king gave it back to him," she said quickly.

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"He made him a lottery cavalier," rejoined Mr. Trevor calmly.

Betty smiled scornfully. "And for such a king men have died!" she said significantly.

"Ingratitude is only human at the worst," he replied, laughing softly, "and you know, 'the king can do no wrong!'"

Lady Betty put her finger on her lip, with a glance toward the card-players.

"You are right," he said, regardless of her caution, "'t is quite useless to die for any king. There is only one thing worth dying for, and that — is supremely worth living for, too."

"And it is not a king?" she commented thoughtfully, "or a queen?"

"A queen, yes," he admitted, "but the queen of hearts. The only thing worth living for," he said, and his voice grew deep and tender, "and dying for, my Lady Clancarty, is — Love."

She blushed and her eyes fell. He had the most compelling glance she had ever encountered. Those eyes of his would enthrall hers, and she looked away.

"I never heard of any man dying of it," she remarked, with a bitter little laugh.

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“That’s because a wise man would rather live for it,” he said; “what exquisite torment for a man to die and leave it behind him — in the shape of a lovely widow.”

“Ah,” said Lady Betty, with a roguish smile, “therein lies the sting!”

“Precisely,” admitted the Irishman; “if there’s one thing that could bring me back to this vale of tears it is my successor!”

“I have heard that in India the widows are burnt on the funeral pyres,” she remarked, a glow of amusement in her eyes; “you might arrange it so for the future Mrs. Trevor.”

He shook his head disconsolate. “She’s sure to be a woman of spirit,” he said; “I could n’t get her consent.”

Betty shrugged her shoulders. “After all you have said of love you can’t find a woman to die for it?”

“I would rather she lived for it,” he said, with his daring smile, “and for me!”

“Men are purely selfish,” she retorted with fine indifference, “it’s always ‘for me’; hadn’t you better dream of living for her?”

“I do!” he replied promptly; “faith, if I didn’t dream of her I should immediately expire — she’s the star of my life.”

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"Oh!" said Lady Betty, in a strange voice, "it has gone as far as that? — she is French, I suppose?" she added with polite interest and elevated brows.

"I never inquire into the nationality of divinities," he said coolly; "she's an angel, and that's enough for her humble adorer."

"You Papists are fond of saints," remarked my lady, tapping the floor with her foot.

"And sinners," he admitted.

Betty turned her shoulder toward him.

"What color are her eyes?" she asked, playing with her fan.

"I can't look into them at this moment," he replied with audacity, "but I hope to tell you later."

She flashed a withering glance at him.

"They are brown," he announced coolly.

Anger and amusement struggled for a moment on Lady Betty's face, and then she laughed and dropped her fan.

He stooped to pick it up and something green and shrivelled fell before her. Lady Betty put her foot on it. He handed her the fan with a bow. The voices in the other room rose a little in a dispute.

"What are they saying?" she asked, swaying her fan before her face.

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He listened and smiled. "They are talking of Lady Horne's divorce," he said; "what is your ladyship's view of it?"

She hesitated — and there is a proverb!

"You are a Papist," she said, "do you believe that a marriage — even a foolish one — is indissoluble?"

"Certainly I do," he replied piously; "perish the thought of severing the tie!"

She reddened.

"So, 't is 'for better or for worse'!" she said bitterly, "and usually for worse."

"'Until death us do part,'" he quoted piously again.

Lady Betty started and turned from red to white.

"'T is a horrible idea," she said, with a shudder, — Lord Sunderland would have heard her with amazement, — "no escape for a poor woman who has been ensnared into a wretched union!"

"A wretched union," he repeated slowly, a change coming over his face, "a wretched union; are all marriages so wretched, my lady?"

"A great many of them," she retorted tartly, and he could only see the curve of her white shoulder and the back of her head.

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He knelt on one knee and began to look around on the floor with an anxious face. After a moment she looked at him over her shoulder.

“What is it?” she asked, blushing and biting her lip.

“My shamrock,” he said, peeping under the table with an air of perplexity.

“Do you always carry vegetables with you?” she asked witheringly.

“I have — since last night,” he retorted, still searching.

“And you dropped it here?” she asked innocently.

He passed his sword under a chair and drew it back slowly over the floor.

“Yes,” he replied, in a tone of deep anxiety, “’t was here.”

She moved to the other side of the fireplace.

“Is that it?” she asked, coolly pointing.

He pounced upon the withered sprig and kissed it, and rising stood looking at her.

“But,” he said, and a daring smile played about his mouth; he took a step nearer, “but some marriages are made — in heaven.”

“And others —” Lady Clancarty pointed downward with a wicked smile.

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"Ah," he answered, "those are of earth, earthy; but when love steps in, then, my lady, then —"

"There comes my Lord Savile," she said, and smiled sweetly.

"Damn him!" he muttered beneath his breath.

The door opened to admit Lord Savile and Mr. Benham, and her greeting was cordiality itself.

"Here's a gentleman who has staked all his fortune on his gray mare and lost it!" Mr. Benham said, his hand on Savile's shoulder, "and he has done nothing but weep for it."

"Saint Thomas!" exclaimed that nobleman, "I'm not the first to stake all on a woman and lose."

"Leave the saint out of it, my lord, when you put the sinner in," said Lady Betty.

"Oh, Saint Mary, there goes my last crown!" came from the other room in the shrill lament of Lady Dacres.

Both Savile and Trevor laughed.

"Change the sex of your saint and you have an honorable example," remarked Trevor, as he picked up the countess' guitar and began to finger it lightly.

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“I ’m a ruined man,” said Savile recklessly, “unless that fickle dame — Fortune — smiles on me to-morrow.”

“You ought to call her a fickle mare, my lord,” suggested Lady Betty artlessly; “when Fortune runs upon four legs it must needs be more fleet than upon two.”

Lord Savile looked into her eyes with a smile.

“If love were kind, fortune might fly, my lady,” he said daringly, but very low.

Lady Clancarty flushed hotly as she turned to greet a newcomer, Sir Edward Mackie, one of Devonshire’s gentlemen; a young fellow with a round, boyish face, who had worn his heart upon his sleeve until he lost it to Lady Betty. But so ingenuous was he, so frankly generous and devoted, that she gave him now her sweetest smile.

Meanwhile, Mr. Trevor still tuned the guitar, but he had heard Savile’s whisper to my lady and had watched her face with keen and searching eyes. Young Mackie brought news for Lady Clancarty.

“Your brother has come,” he said eagerly, “my Lord Spencer; I have just had the honor to wait upon him. Very proud I am too, my lady, for is he not one of the new lights of the

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party, and one of the most learned young men in Britain? ”

She shrugged her white shoulders laughing.

“He is all that, Sir Edward,” she said, “and more — much more,” she added with a droll expression of despair.

“Much learning doth make him mad,” said Mr. Trevor smiling. “I have known such cases on the Continent.”

“’Tis instructive,” Betty admitted, smiling at Sir Edward’s boyish face, “but ’tis dry.”

“Give me a fine horse, a fine woman, and fine music, and all the books in England might burn,” said Benham.

“Oh!” said Lady Betty, and she lifted her brows with a contemptuous glance.

“In sequence, according to your valuation of them, sir,” remarked Mr. Trevor, with a cool smile, “a poor compliment to the sex. But music expresses something — something only — of the beauty and charm of a fair woman.”

“Sing to us, do!” interposed the countess, “I despise comparisons.”

“To hear is to obey, my lady,” he replied, beginning at once to play the sad wild air that made her start and change color.

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Would he dare to sing that here? she thought, her heart beating hard; would he dare? How little she knew him! In a moment his rich tenor voice, a voice of peculiar charm and timbre, filled the room and even startled the card-players.

“ ’T is you shall reign alone,
My dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
’T is you shall have the golden throne,
’T is you shall reign, and reign alone,
My dark Rosaleen! ”

He sang the wild ballad through to the end, and as he ceased, Lady Betty turned to him and smiled, applauding softly. But she said nothing, although young Mackie was openly delighted, and Lady Sunderland exclaimed that it was a marvellous fine performance of a poor song.

“ ’T is an old ballad, madam,” Mr. Trevor replied courteously, “ and perhaps a poor one, but dear to the Irish heart.”

“ Sing an English one next time, sir, or a Dutch — la — yes, your Grace of Bedford, we grow to love everything Dutch.”

Lord Savile meanwhile, with his hands thrust into his pockets and his face flushed, lounged nearer to the singer.

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"A very pretty performance," he said, with an insolent drawl, "worthy a tavern musician. By Jove, sir, the tune is pestiferous here; an Irishman and a cow-stealer are synonymous."

Richard Trevor smiled, his gray eyes flashing dangerously.

"And English noblemen are often cowards, and liars to boot, sir," he said in an undertone, his hand still on the guitar.

"I am at your service," said Savile, in a passionate voice.

Trevor glanced warningly at Lady Clancarty.

"Elsewhere, my lord, with pleasure," he said, still smiling, "I might add with joy."

Lady Sunderland came in now with her guests; she had won at basset and was in high good humor.

"A song," she cried, "another song."

Her eyes sought Trevor and he bowed gravely.

"At another time, my lady," he said; "now I must wait on a friend, who has the first claim upon me. My ladies all, good-night," and he bowed gracefully, a certain merry defiance in his glance.

Lady Betty held out her hand involuntarily.

"I thank you for the ballad," she said and smiled.

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He carried her hand to his lips and, it may be, kissed it with more fervor than courtesy required, for the rosy tide swept over her white neck and her cheeks and brow.

As he went out, Lady Sunderland tapped her fan upon her lips. "Don't tell it," she said, with the coquetry of a girl of sixteen, "don't tell it, but la!—he has the finest figure I ever saw, and the legs of an Apollo."

"'Pon my soul, madam, that's a compliment that's worth dying for," Mr. Benham said, with a peculiar smile at Savile.

Betty seeing it, went over and stood staring into the embers on the hearth, though she pretended to be talking to young Mackie.

CHAPTER XI

A NIGHT OF PORTENTS

ALICE was combing Lady Betty's hair late that night.

The two girls were in Betty's bedroom, a solitary taper burning on the table. In this rosy twilight both faces showed indistinctly. Betty's finery lay upon a chair near by ; she wore only a flowing white robe over her night-rail, and one rosy foot, out of the slipper, rested on the rug. Her luxuriant hair falling about her almost hid her face, and her eyes were fixed pensively upon the fire. Meanwhile, Alice stood behind her combing and brushing her hair with hands that actually trembled, while her face was very white. If Lady Clancarty had looked at her, she would have divined some trouble, but as it was she was only aroused from her revery by the girl's unwonted awkwardness.

"Dear me, Alice!" she exclaimed, "that is the third time you have pulled my hair. I

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shall be as bald soon as Lady Dacres without her perukes. What ails you, girl?"

"I'm nervous," Alice said, her voice breaking suspiciously, "I can't help it."

Lady Betty tossed back her hair, snatched up a taper and looked at her sharply.

"Nervous?" she exclaimed, "why, you are naturally as tame as any barnyard fowl. Nervous! Why, your eyes are sticking out of your head. What is it, girl? Hast met your friend the parson again?"

"No, no," faltered Alice, with a little sob. "I — I overheard some talk between two gentlemen to-night in the hall — and it scared me."

Betty laughed merrily.

"Fie, Alice, fie!" she cried, "an eavesdropper! What horrible thing was it they said? Mercy on us, girl, you look as if they plotted bloody murder!"

"So they did, madam," Alice said soberly.

Lady Betty stared.

"The child's demented," she remarked, shaking her head.

"That I'm not," Alice replied bluntly, wiping a tear from her pale cheek, "but I hate to think of one of them dead — for some folly, too."

"Oh, ho!" said her mistress, setting down

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the taper, "now I understand — there is to be a duel;" then suddenly her mood changed.

"Who were they?" she demanded sharply.

Alice began to show reluctance and her eyes avoided Betty's.

"Two guests of the inn, madam," she said, averting her face.

But Lady Clancarty caught her arm and turned her to the light.

"Out with it, Alice," she said imperiously, "I will know."

"It was Lord Savile," the girl said slowly, "and — and another — a stranger."

"Our stranger of Althorpe, Alice?" Lady Betty said, a sudden indefinable change in her whole aspect.

Alice nodded sullenly.

Her mistress stood quite still for a moment, pressing her hands together. She had shaken her hair about her face again, so that it was concealed. There was something in her attitude so unusual, in the silence, too, of the room, where only the fire crackled, and in the girl's own nervousness, that quite overcame Alice. She began to cry.

"They fight to-morrow," she sobbed, "in the meadow beyond the grove of limes — at sunrise."

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"Who are their seconds?" Lady Betty asked, in a strangely quiet tone.

"Mr. Benham, so I heard them say, and a young fellow with a face like a boy. He was to act for the stranger because he had no friends."

"Young Mackie!" said Lady Clancarty. "You heard this and did not tell me, Alice? I find it hard to forgive you."

"But why should I?" cried Alice trembling, "what could your ladyship do?"

Betty gave a strange little laugh. "You shall see what I will do to-morrow," she said quietly, "for you shall go with me."

"Go where, my lady?" Alice asked in surprise.

"To the meadow behind the limes," replied her mistress calmly; "there I shall go to-morrow, at sunrise, and stop this folly. It began in my rooms, Alice, over a ballad, and I have no mind that it shall end in bloodshed."

"Indeed, madam, I think you are in the right," said Alice simply, "but what can we do? They will never listen to a woman!"

Lady Clancarty shut her lips firmly, and held her little bare foot out to the fire, warming it.

"I fear you cannot stop them," Alice went on; "Lord Savile was very fierce, but the other

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gentleman — oh, madam, I feared him more ! he was so cool ; and those eyes of his — they are like steel.”

“ So they are,” said Betty absently, “ and hath he not a handsome face ? ” and she looked pensively into the fire. “ To-morrow we shall go, Alice, to-morrow at sunrise, and I shall stop this duel — I will stop it, if I have to go to the king ! ”

But the little handmaid did not reply ; she was watching her mistress with an anxious face. She did not know the meaning of this new Lady Betty, and some hint of impending trouble weighed upon her. She was country bred, too, and timid, and the thought of the gray dawn with the shadowy trees looming through the mist and only the flash of steel to illumine the scene, made her tremble. But Betty, usually so observant and sympathetic and light hearted, did not heed her ; she was suddenly self-absorbed, pensive, quietly determined. She went to the window and peeped out into the night.

“ How many hours until sunrise, Alice ? ” she asked.

“ Six, my lady,” the girl replied with a sigh, “ and I wish it might be sixteen ! ”

Betty laughed, a strange little embarrassed

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laugh, coming back and sinking on her knees before the hearth, the firelight playing on her lovely face, and the shadowy masses of her hair, and the gleaming white of her draperies.

“I cannot sleep,” she said softly; “I cannot sleep — I am not fit for a soldier’s wife!”

Alice shuddered. “Indeed, my lady, I’d as lief marry a butcher!” she cried, with such genuine horror and disgust that she moved her mistress to merriment.

“There, my girl, I told you so,” cried Lady Betty, “you were meant for that same parson.”

CHAPTER XII

MASTER AND MAN

MEANWHILE, under the same roof, but in far different quarters, the young Irishman called Richard Trevor was talking to his servant, the same who had led his horse up and down in the inn-yard under Lady Betty's window. The room — an attic one — was scarcely ten feet square, and almost devoid of furniture; there was a pallet, a table, and two chairs; and a mat of braided straw at the foot of the master's bed served for the man's. A single candle burned low in its socket on the table, and here Richard Trevor sat with some writing materials before him, but he was not writing; he leaned back in his chair and listened, with his amused smile, to the glib talk of his attendant.

“Faix, sir, they be afther charging more here for a bite of mate or a dhrap of liquor thin in anny ither place in th’ kingdom,” said the man

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dolefully; "I've bin afther minding yer lordship's instructions about the money, an' by the Powers, me stomach is loike to clave to me backbone."

"We can starve respectably, however, Denis," said his master smiling, and turning the contents of his purse out on the table; "a small sum for our needs, but it must serve," he added, counting the money with a reckless air; "besides, one of us may die before we come to the end of it."

"We'll be afther doin' it here, yer honor," said Denis gloomily, "from an impty stomach. Betwane th' landlord an' the ranting, tearing Whig gentry in th' stable-yard, sir, I'm clane daft."

"So they're all for the king in possession, are they?" said Trevor, in an amused tone; "I hope you've heeded my instructions to keep your tongue quiet in your head and mind your own business."

"Faix, me lord, I've bin afther minding mine, but they're afther minding it too, th' ill-favored thribe!"

"That is because you are an Irishman, Denis; they know that at once."

"Indade, yer lordship's mistaken intirely; they've no idee at all that I'm a Munster

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man," said his servant, with an air of satisfaction, "divil a bit of it! Sometimes I'm a Frenchy an' sometimes I'm a Dutchy — but an Irishman niver! Lady Clancarty's woman — a sly divil with a pair of eyes that be winking eternally — she's bin swate to me. By the Virgin, sir, she's bin afther thryin' to sound me about yer lordship. She looks at me and purrs, for all th' wurruld, loike a big white tabby, an' says she, 'You're an Irishman, sir!' 'Divil a bit, me darlint,' says I, 'I'm a Dutchman, born at th' Hague and me mither was forty-first cousin, wanst removed, to th' king's grandmither,' says I. 'Ye don't tell me!' says she, and her little pale eyes blinked loike a candle in th' wind. 'An' what'll be yer name, sir?' she asks, as swate as honey. 'Mynheer Tulipius,' says I, for I could n't think of anither name for th' life of me. 'La, sir,' says she with a simper, 'you look loike a tulip, to be shure.' 'So I do, me darlint,' I replied, and I thried to make up me mind to kiss her, but, bedad, sir, I could n't do it; there's something about her that sinds the cowl'd creeps up me spine."

"You're a great coward, Denis," said his master smiling, "afraid of a woman! It's a new fault in you, and one that I did not ex-

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pect. As for this creature, what were her questions about me? ”

“ ‘Yer master’s an Irishman, Mynheer Tulpus,’ says she, ‘that we all know fer a fact.’ ‘Is he, indade?’ says I, with the greatest amazement; ’tis the first time I iver heard it,’ says I; ‘he was born in London and his fayther was one of Ginerall Cromwell’s Ironsides.’ ‘Ye don’t say so,’ says she, ‘how iver did he get on so well at Saint Germain thin?’ and she blinked a hundred times in a second. ‘Saint Germain!’ says I, opening my eyes wide; ‘indade, they were so cowld to him there that he was afther laving before he got there,’ says I, ‘it’s quite well known,’ I wint on, as slick as silk, ‘that whin the man Jimmy Stuart, rayalized that my masther was in France he put on a shirt of mail an’ niver took it off at all, even av he was aslape in his ruffled silk night-rail, for fear he’d be kilt on th’ field of honor.’ ‘Is that so?’ says she; ‘an’ thin p’r’aps ye’ve met me Lord Clancarty out there?’ ‘Clancarty?’ says I, squinting hard with wan eye, ‘there was a gintleman of that same name hung jist as I was afther laving Holland — mebbe he’s yer friend?’ By Saint Patrick, me lord, you ought to have sane her stare! She sthopped winking thin,

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an' looked loike a cat that's sane a bird ; on me sowl, sir, I looked to see av there was n't a furry tail swinging behind, to wurk th' charm on me. 'Clancarty hung?' says she, clapping her hand to her heart, 'what for?' 'Faix, I don't know, me darlint,' says I, 'unless it was for being too much of a Whig.' 'Pshaw!' cries she, stamping her foot, 'ye're a paddy fool!' 'Niver a bit,' says I, 'I'm a Dutch wizard, me darlint; just let me be afther telling yer fortune.' But away she wint in a towering rage, an' left me with me heart broken intirely at the siparation."

"I fear you did not deceive her," said Clancarty, with a laugh, and he unsheathed his sword, running his finger along the blade. "My old friend needs polishing, Denis," he added, with his careless air of good humor, "I've a duel on my hands for the morning."

The Irishman's face sobered in an instant, and he cast a look of concern at his master.

"I'm sorra for it, me lord," he said, with an honest ring in his voice, "ye've no friends here."

"Except you, Denis," said his master kindly, "and if I fall, all my effects are yours — and —" he paused an instant and then laughed recklessly, "and you can tell the widow."

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"She's a foine lady, me lord," said Denis artfully, "'t is a pity to throw away yer life now."

"She's a woman to die for, Denis," exclaimed his lord, a sudden glow passing over his face; "but I shall not die — faith, I've fought too many duels to die in one."

"There's always loike to be wan too many, yer honor," said Denis gravely, "and wan thrust of th' sword and th' house of Macarthy loses its head."

The young man laughed recklessly.

"And a beggarly exile dies," he said bitterly. "I fear you are not a man of courage, Denis; I think I've heard of you in the retreat from Boyne," he added, with a laughing glance at the dark-faced, sturdy Irishman.

"Ah, sir, that was the fault of me shoes, an' I blush for it," Denis replied.

"Your shoes," repeated his master, "and wherefore your shoes?"

"'T was afther this fashion, me lord," said Denis gravely; "there was a scamp of a shoemaker in Dublin that was accused, an' rightly as I b'lave, of being allied with the Powers of Darkness, and he was afther making me shoes. About that time money was scarce, sir, as ye know, in spite of King James's brass pieces, and

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it was glad I was to get the shoes at all, without bein' over an' above particular about the maker. So whin Danny O'Toole says to me that he'll make me a blooming pair of boots an' thrust me fer the money, niver a thought had I av the divilish plot he was afther laying against me honor. 'Make 'em aisy,' says I, 'for me feet are sore with the chasing of the English an' the Dutch.' 'Don't ye worry,' says he with a wink, 'I'll make 'em so aisy they'll walk off without ye,' — and faith, so he did! They were the beautifullest shoes, me lord, and they fitted me loike the skin on a potaty, and as fer walking in 'em, they niver touched the ground unless they stuck fast in a bog, and that was n't often. I niver had such a pair of shoes, nor such comfort, and all wint along as smooth as lying — until that cursed day of the battle of Boyne."

"A day when a good many Irishmen had no shoes, Denis," remarked his master, "or lost them in running — to our eternal shame!"

"That was n't what happened to me, my lord," said Denis regretfully; "'t was a black day fer Ireland; yer lordship niver spake a thruer word! But, as fer me, my shoes had bin running away from me so — the very divil seemed to be in 'em — that I cut some stout

Master and Man

thongs of hide and bound those boots to me legs before I wint into the battle, fer, thought I, av I don't I'll be afther losing them, the jewels ! I was right in the thick of it, an' a hot day it was, as yer honor knows, and but for that divil of a Dutchman that they call king, we moight have won, but he drove his men through the river loike a demon ! Well, sir, I was right in the thick of the carnage ; I'd jist cut a clane swathe through the Dutch Blues, and I was daling death and destrhuction on ivery side, following in th' thrack of Sarsfield, whin, all of a suddent, me shoes turned me around and comminced to run. I was beside meself with the shame of it, me lord. I cut at those thongs with my sword an' I swore an' called on the saints and the divils, but niver a bit could I get those boots off, and away they ran, loike the wind, splash through the mud and the mire, and they niver sthopped until we reached Dublin ; but, my lord," Denis lowered his voice and winked one eye, "even my shoes did n't get there — before King James !"

" Alas, no," said his master sternly, "it was a king we lacked," and he rose and walked twice across the room, his face darkly clouded.

His man watched him keenly, with an ex-

My Lady Clancarty

pression of deep concern and simple affection, — the humble devotion of a faithful dog.

“You will clean my sword and call me an hour before sunrise, Denis,” he said; “I will snatch some hours’ rest, even if it happens to be my turn to-morrow,” and he laughed as he began to cast off his garments with his servant’s help.

Denis shook his head sadly. “Ah, me Lord Clancarty,” he said with a break in his voice, “’t would be a sad day fer me, and you are so ready to die with a smile on your lips. Ye were iver so, but ye’ll break a heart some day, me lord; jist as recklessly — an’ ye’ll forgive me fer saying it.”

“There is not much that I would not forgive you, old Denis,” said the young nobleman kindly, “we’re old friends and tried. But what have I to live for at best, unless it be the headsman’s block? I am a proscribed and penniless outlaw, Denis; if, by any chance, I am recognized, I go to the Tower. I have no friends here; not even my wife knows who I am — and why should she? It seems but folly to think of her, when I have only an exile’s life to offer her — I am a fool, a wretched fool!”

“Indade, me lord, ye greatly misjudge a woman av you think she’ll be afther counting

Master and Man

yer money — or the costs ayther,” said Denis quietly ; “ a woman niver thinks of it, bless her heart, she jist falls in love, and thin to the divil with prudence or wisdom ayther. And, by the Virgin, me Lady Clancarty is none of yer cowards. I’ve sane the spark in her øye, me lord, and if it plazes her, she’ll fight yer battles, sir, to the ind of time.”

Lord Clancarty smiled. “ Exactly, Denis,” said he, “ but if I do not please her ? ”

Denis was on his knees, drawing off his master’s shoes.

“ She’d be a blind woman, thin, sir,” he said, “ and faix, I’ll wager me lady knows a foine man whin she sees wan. But, pshaw, sir, by to-morrow night ye may be stark and stiff and ready for the churchyard,” and Denis shook his head dolefully.

The earl laughed, throwing himself upon his hard bed.

“ Put out the taper, Denis,” he said, “ we’ll hope for the best. If I can’t live for my lady, at least I can die for her — with a light heart,” and he turned his face to the wall with a laugh.

Denis wiped his eyes on his sleeve and wagged his head again and again, his mind on the morrow.

CHAPTER XIII

LADY BETTY TAKES THE FIELD

THE sun had not yet risen : earth and sky were softly gray and brown, with green where the meadows lay, and purple in the shadows. Morning, like a white flower with a heart of gold, opened in the east. Shafts of light — the sun's gold-tipped arrows — quivered on the distant hills, while the vapors, smokelike and fantastic, floated along the level lands and the trees loomed spectre-like.

It was chilly, too, with the chill of dawn in the early autumn, and Lord Clancarty and young Mackie were muffled in their cloaks as they walked across the fields together. The Irishman was smiling, in his usual daring fashion, but the younger man was sober and even nervous as he listened to him.

"I have to thank you, Sir Edward," Clancarty said, "for standing by a stranger, but I should look for no less at your hands."

Lady Betty takes the Field

"I am very glad to serve you, Mr. Trevor," the young man replied, blushing like a girl, "I thought Lord Savile's attitude toward you quite unwarranted."

"We Irishmen do not look for courtesy at the hands of our conquerors, except in a few rare instances," Clancarty said; "but it is due to you, Sir Edward, to tell you that my name is not Trevor; I assumed it for convenience only; I am the proscribed exile, Donough Macarthy of Clancarty."

Young Mackie stopped short with a gasp.

"Lady Clancarty's husband!" he cried, turning deadly pale.

Lord Clancarty bowed. "The same," he said smiling, "and in telling you, I confide in your honor not to reveal my identity — even to Lady Clancarty, unless I fall, and then — I would have her ladyship know that she was free."

But young Mackie had not yet recovered his composure; he stared at the earl strangely.

"Does she not divine your identity?" he asked, and the pain in his face was so easy to read that Lady Clancarty's husband smiled again.

"I think not," he responded; "but we must go on unless we would be tardy at keeping the

My Lady Clancarty

tryst." Then he glanced sharply at the boy, "I take it for granted that you are willing to stand by me; if not — I fully pardon you, Sir Edward, and I can go alone."

Young Mackie's face crimsoned.

"Nay, my lord," he said bluntly, "I did not offer to stand by you for love, but for honor's sake, and now — I will — for her sake," and he raised his hat reverently.

Lord Clancarty bared his own head and kissed the hilt of his sword.

"For her dear sake, sir," he said; "so let it be, I love you for it," and they walked on in silence.

They passed through the grove of limes and entered the field. As they did so, the sunbeams, sloping from the hills, fell on the tree tops, but the long meadow was in the shadow. The sweetness of new-mown hay was in the air; there was a glint of white blossoming still upon the hedgerow, and beyond, the red brown of new turned earth and green, the green of the turf and the hawthorn.

Across the meadow from the farther side came Lord Savile and Mr. Benham, and as the two parties approached they saluted courteously. Clancarty was smiling, gracious, perfectly at ease, but his opponent scowled

Lady Betty takes the Field

sullenly; some instinct—a brute one doubtless—made him hate this daring Irishman. Sir Edward, full of boyish importance, beckoned Mr. Benham aside.

“Can’t we adjust this difference, sir?” he asked; “there is a serious reason why they should not fight.”

Benham stared at him coolly. “To be sure, so I supposed,” he drawled indifferently; “but Savile will give you twenty reasons why they should.”

“For all that, we might adjust it honorably,” urged Mackie, with feverish anxiety.

“Pshaw, man, we can’t!” said Benham, with contempt; “they’re both in love with the same woman. You are inexperienced, sir,” he added aloud, smiling scornfully. “Measure the paces, Sir Edward; the sun is rising, and the advantage will lie then with the man whose back is toward it. We will draw lots, sir, so—ah, Lord Savile has drawn the best position,” and he laughed complacently.

Young Mackie, crimsoned with confusion and annoyance, made no further effort at a compromise; instead he busied himself with the weapons and in helping Lord Clancarty strip off coat and waistcoat. Then the two men confronted each other, sword in hand, and

My Lady Clancarty

as they did so the sun looked over the horizon and the meadow suddenly lay in a golden mist as the sparks flew from the steel.

This was the picture that Betty saw floating in a golden haze, two strong, lithe figures swaying lightly from side to side and the flash of their naked swords at play.

"For shame!" she cried, thrusting their weapons aside with her own white hands, "for shame! So, there is no better cause for a fight than a song?"

At the sight of her the two men stepped back in sheer amazement, sinking their sword points in the ground at her feet.

"Ay, shame on you both!" she cried with sparkling eyes; "'t is but a pretty fashion of murder—and I 'll none of it! Put up your weapons, gentlemen, for he who draws his here is my friend no more!"

Lord Savile's sword leaped into its sheath, but Clancarty kissed the hilt of his and handed it to Lady Betty.

"Madam, my honor is involved," he said, "and I place it in your hands."

The color rose in her cheeks and she turned on Savile.

"My lord," she said wilfully, "I heard it all, and 't is you who should ask pardon."

Lady Betty takes the Field

Savile flushed darkly and folded his arms.

"My lady," he said, "my sword is at your service, but you ask too much now."

"Ah, you will not trust me with your honor, my lord," she retorted, with a little laugh.

"Nay," he replied testily, "a man may not grovel to his foe."

"Oh," said Lady Betty, and she glanced at him archly, "is your reasoning quite sound, my lord?"

Savile bit his lip; he saw Lord Clancarty smile and brush a fallen leaf from his sleeve with elaborate care.

"Come, come," interposed Mr. Benham, "let there be peace, since my lady wills it; and here, too, is young Mackie pining to mediate. My lord, we cannot quarrel before a lady," and he spoke a few words very low in Savile's ear.

Betty, meanwhile, stood between them, holding Clancarty's sword in her hand; her tall young figure outlined in the heavenly morning sunshine, and the glory of the day in her eyes.

"To put up your sword is naught, my lord, unless there be peace," she said, smiling ingenuously, "pshaw, what a petty quarrel! 'Tis like two women over a cup of tea or a new

My Lady Clancarty

gown," and she shrugged her shoulders prettily.

Lord Savile crossed over to Clancarty.

"Your hand, sir," he said, and then, as he clasped it, very low, "another time and another place."

"I am always at your service," replied Clancarty with a scornful smile, and he took out his handkerchief and wiped the palm of his right hand.

The gesture made Lady Betty smile and bite her lip, though she had not heard the undertone.

"Faith, the morning is so lovely that it augurs a peaceful day," she said, with her sweetest manner. "Gentlemen, you are all bidden to join my Lady Sunderland and me at eleven for a cup of chocolate before we go to the races."

"Who could refuse?" Mr. Benham said gallantly; "when men make peace for your sake, my lady, what would they not do?"

But Lady Betty's quick eye caught the gloom on the boyish face of young Mackie. She held out her hand.

"Sir Edward, you will take me home to the inn?" she said.

He colored like a girl and involuntarily glanced at Lord Clancarty; then catching his

Lady Betty takes the Field

lordship's falcon eye, he bowed in deep confusion.

"I'm only too happy, my lady," he said.

She stood quite still, her bright eyes on Lord Savile and Mr. Benham. Then she pointed with her finger toward the farther end of the field.

"Yonder," she said, "one combatant and his friend retire, and," she turned quickly, pointing in the opposite direction, "yonder, the others go!"

Clancarty laughed. "A safe device, my lady," he said, "but I could not fight without my sword."

She blushed prettily and held it out to him.

"I forgot, sir," she said.

He took it gracefully, kissing the hand that gave it in spite of her quick frown of displeasure.

Lord Savile bowed profoundly, his hand on his heart.

"Madam, I obey," he said gallantly, and retreated with Mr. Benham in the direction she had chosen, and at the same time Lord Clancarty went in the other, leaving Lady Betty alone in the field with young Mackie.

Hovering in the distance was the muffled figure of Alice, who had accompanied her

My Lady Clancarty

mistress to the grove of limes and halted there, with her fingers in her ears, lest she should hear the clash of swords.

But Lady Betty saw her not, nor the glory of the day, nor the green of hedgerows and fields, nor the blooming daisy at her feet. Her eyes followed the figure of Clancarty, and there was a shadow on her face. She shivered and drew her cloak about her.

“Come, Sir Edward,” she said, “we must run for it; I am a truant, and Lord Spencer will put me upon bread and water if he finds me upon such errands, and faith, sir, I deserve it!”

CHAPTER XIV

THE INN GARDEN

BETWEEN two vases that overflowed with scarlet geraniums, the worn stone steps of the inn-yard descended directly upon a gravel path in the old garden. The path — flanked on either side by tall hedges — wound completely around the garden and through the centre, in a kind of true lovers' knot, in the loops of which were all old-fashioned flowers ; pale tea roses — the last of September's bloom — and mignonette ; pansies and rosemary grew there, and the blue of larkspur. Only a few windows looked out upon it, and it was a secluded spot where the sun shone and the pigeons flocked. So still was it, in the farther corners, that there was scarcely a sound but the soft " kourre, kourre ! " of the feathered visitors.

Here Lady Betty walked slowly, her hands behind her, her head a little on one side, as she talked to Clancarty, whom she still knew only

My Lady Clancarty

as Richard Trevor. She was dressed in white, a bunch of red flowers at her belt and red plumes in her hat, and either its broad brim or her mood cast a shadow in her eyes. They were softer, more pensive, and less sparkling than usual.

"I was only eleven years old, sir," she said, "a mere baby, and I have never seen Lord Clancarty since. How should I know how he looks? Is not my curiosity pardonable? Pray, Mr. Trevor, describe him."

Her companion had been watching her keenly and now he smiled.

"I'm poor at descriptions, my lady," he said calmly, "but take my word for it, Clancarty's a handsome man."

"About your height, sir?" asked Lady Betty, casting a quizzical, sidelong glance at him.

He took time to consider. "Very nearly, I should think, Lady Clancarty," he said, "and straight as an arrow — with a good head and keen eyes, a fine nose, a firm chin — oh, a very handsome rascal, madam, and quite unworthy of you."

"Indeed," said Betty, amused; "you take the side, then, of my family; they too believe him unworthy."

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"He is unworthy, madam," said the disguised nobleman gravely, "he is unworthy; but, in spite of that, I can't advise you to cast him off. But for his skill as a swordsman I should have lost my life; I am therefore, of necessity, his true vassal, Lady Clancarty, and I must plead his cause."

Lady Betty's face changed and she made a petulant gesture.

"No one can plead it, sir," she said sharply, "he should plead it himself."

"He should indeed, madam," he said earnestly, "but how? Many things keep back a proscribed exile and a beggar. How can he plead his cause with the heiress of an earl, a beautiful and gifted and wealthy woman? What can he offer her? A life of exile, poverty, and obscurity? My Lady Clancarty, any proud man might well pause."

But Betty's chin was elevated, her eyes scornful.

"The pride is, of course, all on his side, sir," she said coolly; "there is naught to be said for her. How, think you, does a woman feel who is deserted by her husband? Ay, more, who is unacknowledged by him — unclaimed!"

He started and looked at her earnestly.

My Lady Clancarty

"You are right, madam," he said, "it is a grievous fault. I despise my Lord Clancarty for it, but I know that the day will come when he will sue for your forgiveness with all his heart. And he has never known you. He has been in battles, in sieges, in exile, in poverty, in illness, and he was but a lad when you were wedded. My lady, I can say no more, even for him; I would fain say it for myself—but for him."

She flashed a startled, wondering look at him; her heart stood still—after all, was he? was he not? She did not know, but his eyes held her; she blushed, palpitated, shrank like a mere child. From the first, she had thought this man her husband, but now—? An awful doubt shook her soul. Could it be that he was not? She put out her hands with a strange gesture as though she would hold him off.

"'Tis fourteen years, sir," she said, "and he has never written me one word—or to my family for me."

"That is not true," he replied gravely; "I know, from Lord Clancarty's own lips, that he has written to your father within a short time, ay, madam, twice since the Peace of Ryswick."

"Ah," said Lady Betty, for a light broke in upon her, and she thought of the tall old

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man walking in the gallery at Althorpe, "I never knew it," she added quietly, "my whole family opposes any mention of — of my husband."

She pronounced the word with a soft adorable hesitation, blushing rosily up to her very ears, and his eyes glowed as he looked at her. They turned a loop of the gravel walk and passed Melissa, who huddled against the hedge, courtesying low. Betty scarcely glanced at her.

"Then there is no one to plead my friend's cause but your own heart, Lady Clancarty," he said quietly, "your own heart and the tie that must plead for itself a little. I have no eloquence to match the occasion, willingly as I serve my benefactor."

"I tell you plainly, sir," she retorted, "that I will hear only one suit, and that is from him; nor will I, mark you, promise to hear that favorably. Love, sir, is not cold and a laggard and full of excuses. If I am worth having I am worth winning."

"Madam, I am constrained to tell the truth," he said in a tone of deep emotion; "I believe that Lord Clancarty would die to win you."

"Die, sir," she said archly, "rather live. Dead he could not win me."

My Lady Clancarty

“Ay, and ’t would be the bitterness of death to lose you,” he said; “’t is so—even to think of it!”

The break in his words made her heart beat fast, but she was mistress of herself now.

“Especially after fourteen years of absence,” she mocked wickedly.

“Fourteen years in purgatory, madam,” he replied, his tone full of pathos, of powerful emotion under restraint; “and when the poor exile sees at last the gates of paradise!—ah, my lady, you will not close them in his face?”

She bowed her head a little, looking pensively at the ground. A thousand emotions swept across her charming face. Then she looked up, her eyes dancing with mischief,—arch, naughty, daring.

“A singular paradise for my Lord Clancarty,” she said, “a paradise with a Whiggish Protestant wife in it, and a Whiggish Protestant mother-in-law, and the greatest Whig in England for a brother-in-law. Sir, I need enumerate no more.”

The Irishman laughed a little bitterly.

“Madam,” he said, with daring tenderness in his tone, “you know not what love is! Who would count the cost—who loved? By all the saints, my lady, love burns away both

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politics and creeds ; death itself is beaten by it — and hell ! Ah, to teach you how to love. 'T would be worth purgatory !" his gray eyes flashed, his strong face set itself sternly.

Lady Betty looking at him drew her breath hard ; she was almost frightened. Here was a nature she could not conquer and she could not scorn. She bit her lip and looked steadily away, her heart beating in her throat.

"If Lord Clancarty came here," he said after a moment, in a constrained voice, "would you see him ? would you listen to him ?"

She hesitated ; she no longer believed that this man might be her husband ; he had succeeded in misleading her, and her whole soul was tossing and burning in the fire of a new and passionate emotion, but she tried to think.

"I would see him, yes," she said with white lips, glancing defiantly at him, "he is my husband."

His eyes darkened and his face changed ; she could not read it. They had come back to the old stone steps. At the top appeared Lady Sunderland and Lady Dacres, too far off as yet to be heard.

"He shall come, then, my lady," he said very low, looking straight into her eyes, "he shall come — if he dies for it."

My Lady Clancarty

Lady Betty's face was as white as her gown, and her fingers trembled as she swept her skirts aside on either hand and courtesied gracefully.

"I bid you adieu, sir," she said, and walked up the steps just as Lady Sunderland called out sharply, —

"Betty, Betty, come and take tea with us, my love, and teach Lady Dacres that old game of 'Angel Beast'; she hath forgotten it. La, how white you are, my dear; a touch of rouge and a patch — you look like a ghost."

"I am, madam," said Lady Betty.

And the two dames stared.

.
That night the ruthless Lady Betty awakened her attendant.

"Alice," she said, "hast ever heard the legend of King Arthur?"

The poor handmaid yawned.

"Nay, madam," she replied sleepily, "who was he?"

"A king of long ago, Alice," Lady Betty explained, "I have heard the legend from my old Welsh nurse, and part of it relates to his wife, his queen. She was very beautiful, and she had never seen the king when the marriage was arranged."

"Oh, mercy on us, madam!" exclaimed

The Inn Garden

Alice, "and she did n't know what he looked like?"

"Not at all," declared her mistress, "and she set out with all her maidens to go to his kingdom to be married —"

"Indeed, my lady, could n't he come for her — like a decent civil gentleman?" asked Alice rousing up.

"No, no, he could n't come," said Lady Clancarty, "but he sent his best friend, a brave and noble knight, to meet her, and she — she thought he was the king in disguise and — and she fell in love with him, and when she found out her mistake, and that the king was wholly unlike this knight, she could n't love her husband — she loved instead his friend."

"My goodness, Lady Betty, how improper!" said Alice horrified, "his friend was a false man — and no true knight!"

Lady Betty had been sitting on the edge of Alice's bed but she rose now and stood quite still, her white figure showing in the darkness.

"But, Alice, she was so beautiful, so fascinating — he could n't help it, he loved her!"

"He could help it," said Alice stoutly, "he stole her love from her husband! He could help it, just as a man can help stealing a horse."

My Lady Clancarty

Betty gave a little gasp.

"And the queen?" she said faintly.

"She was a very wicked woman, madam," declared the moralist, shaking up her pillows vigorously. "They do say that King Charles had an awful court; perhaps it was the fashion."

"Perhaps it was," admitted Lady Betty, and crept softly back to bed and wept salt tears in solitude.

CHAPTER XV

MY LADY SUNDERLAND TAKES TEA

A SMOKING teapot and some cups of India ware adorned a table of polished mahogany, the very best tea service in the possession of the landlord of the Lion's Head. And before it sat Lady Sunderland and her intimate, Lady Dacres. Opposite, Lady Betty was stirring a cup of chocolate. There was a little black patch on her white forehead and another on the tip of her rosy chin, and her gown of gold-colored paduasoy became her well.

A servant brought in a tray with some glasses and a bottle of usquebaugh, and served the elder dames, who had been pretending to sip tea. The two worthies were just from the cockpit and had won forty pounds between them. Lady Sunderland, in a flowered brocade, with a painted and patched face, could do nothing but simper, and even old Lady Dacres grinned placidly, while the younger countess

My Lady Clancarty

watched them from under her dark lashes and made no comments.

"La, Betty, there never was such an obliging man as young Savile," said Lady Sunderland, sipping her usquebaugh; "he ran about at the cockpit to wait upon us, and his wit — take my word for it, we'd have lost fifty pounds but for his judgment of the birds."

"Oh, he knows whose mamma to wait upon!" said Lady Dacres, with a sly wink at her friend; "how sweet the young fellows are to the mother of such a daughter."

Lady Sunderland tittered. "There was a time when I thought it was the mamma and not the daughter," she said, with a simper; "but now it's, 'How's Lady Clancarty?' and 'Where's your ladyship's daughter?' and 'My compliments to the fair Lady Elizabeth.' La, how the beaux smirk and bow!"

"Now's your chance, Betty, dear," said Lady Dacres; "don't make 'em dance too long, my girl, we can't be young but once."

Betty gave her a cold stare. "I'm already married, madam," she said, and pushed the bottle nearer to the elbow of the old peeress; "take another drop, my lady, 'twill sustain you under the blow."

Lady Sunderland set down her glass and

My Lady Sunderland takes Tea

fixed her daughter with an irate eye, but before she could give voice to her wrath they were interrupted by the entrance of Lord Spencer. He came in with an air of cool elegance, faultlessly attired, and bowing gracefully to the three women, kissed his mother's hand, and took his place with his back to the window, overlooking them with an air of superiority that was peculiarly exasperating to his high-spirited sister.

"La, my dear, what a happy woman you are," Lady Dacres said, in an audible aside to Lady Sunderland, "to be the mother of two such beautiful children. 'Pon my soul, Spencer would have broken my heart at eighteen!"

"Nay, you would have broken mine, madam," Lord Spencer replied gracefully.

She giggled and took another draught of usquebaugh, following Lady Clancarty's suggestion.

"Tell us the news, Spencer," said Lady Betty impatiently, with a contemptuous glance at the old woman.

"The king is better," said her brother, with a drawl, "and the Princess of Denmark did not go out to-day because of a quarrel with Lady Marlborough."

"Poor soul, she's little better than a

My Lady Clancarty

slave," remarked Betty scornfully; "is that all?"

"No; the news of the day is the duel. It has just come out that Sir Thomas Compton shot and killed his brother-in-law last Tuesday."

Lady Sunderland gave a little scream of surprise. "What? Shot Lord Fraunces?"

Spencer nodded gloomily.

"And wherefore?" demanded his sister.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Because he was a traitor," he said coolly; "he kept his horse saddled in his stable ready for flight, and two grooms at his beck; this made Compton suspect him. So he went down to Deptford, on pretence of seeing his sister, and he found the fellow was in league with the French party and — There was a quarrel and he shot him. There's an article about it in the *Post-Boy*."

"The cold-hearted brute!" cried Betty; "his poor sister loved her husband dearly. Where is she?"

"Mad as Bedlam," replied her brother coolly; "a man must do his duty, even if it kills his sister."

"Oh, I suppose so," said Lady Betty, rising, "he must stab her to the heart and glory in

My Lady Sunderland takes Tea

it — for his party,” she added mockingly; “a fine spirit, sir, I admire it!”

“So do I,” he replied pompously, staring at her with hard eyes; “a man must do his duty, like a Spartan, to his king, his conscience, and his party. There are examples enough in the history of Greece and of Rome, lofty —”

“Nonsense!” cried Lady Betty vigorously, “to the wind with your examples. Give me a noble heart, a Christian life, a brotherly love, a willingness to live and die for high purposes. Poor Lady Fraunces!”

“Oh, never you mind, my dear,” put in old Lady Dacres, with a titter, “she’ll get over it. Grief does n’t kill; her mother had three husbands and —” she whispered a scandal behind her fan to Lady Sunderland, who was so overcome with her wit that she rocked with laughter, wiping the tears from her eyes.

“Your sympathy is quite absurd,” said Spencer, looking straight into Betty’s eyes. “Sir Thomas did his duty. I would have sent a traitor brother-in-law to the block, madam, quite as cheerfully.”

“And your sister also, I presume,” she replied, courtesying profoundly; “from my heart I thank you, my lord.”

My Lady Clancarty

"Oh, la, Betty, drink your chocolate and don't be a fool," said her mother petulantly.

Betty smiled sweetly.

"I thank you," she said, "I have quite finished it. I will send some more to my Lord Spencer," and she walked out of the room with her head in the air.

Half way across the hall she met a servant, the Irishman Denis. He stopped her with a bow, one hand on his heart and an air of great secrecy and gallantry, and he handed her a letter. She took it as silently, and when she reached her own door she hid it in her bosom for she knew that Alice Lynn was there. The girl had been folding up her ladyship's finery and looked up at her entrance.

"Everything is ready now, my lady," she said, "and if it pleases you, I will go into town a little way to buy that ribbon for you."

"Certainly, Alice," Betty assented with alacrity, "and here is the money; and stop, too, at the haberdasher's and buy some more of that silk; and here, my girl, get some pink ribbon for that Sunday frock of yours, I will have you look your best."

Alice courtesied and thanked her, blushing with pleasure.

"You are so dear a mistress to me, madam,"

My Lady Sunderland takes Tea

she said tenderly, "I am not half worthy of it."

Lady Clancarty patted her cheek.

"Do you love me, Alice?" she asked pensively.

"Dearly, madam," said the girl, simply, "and I would serve you — as my family served yours — faithfully forever."

Lady Betty sighed.

"I may need it," she said, and busied herself examining some lace and ribbons that Alice had just laid aside.

"I trust you may need nothing but my love and service, madam," Alice said; "may happiness and love and honor ever attend my dear, dear lady," and she went on talking cheerfully of the fair day, the sunshine, and the gay scene without, for she saw a shadow on the countess' face and it troubled her loyal heart.

But Lady Clancarty said not a word. Instead, her eyes avoided the girl's honest glance; she blushed and paled like a guilty thing, but an adorable smile trembled on her lips. Not until Alice went out, closing the door behind her, did Betty move. Then she shot the bolts and drew forth the paper from her bosom; she looked over her shoulder, smiled, carried it half way to her face, started, and held it off

My Lady Clancarty

again, opening it, at last, under the window. The sheet was closely covered with writing and she read it eagerly, and her hands quivered so that the paper shook, and she fell on her knees beside the window and leaning her arms upon the sill, buried her face upon them. She knelt there a long time, the sunlight touching her hair and the beautiful curves of her shoulders. After a while she rose, and going slowly to the mirror stood looking at herself, the crumpled paper in her hand. Her face was white as snow but beautiful, with quite a new and tender beauty. She scarcely knew herself, even when she smiled, nodding at her own reflection.

“’T is he!” Lady Betty murmured to the mirror, laughing softly, “’t is he! Oh, my prophetic heart — I knew it!”

CHAPTER XVI

MY LORD CLANCARTY

THERE was a ball that night at Newmarket, but Lady Clancarty did not go, in spite of the commands and entreaties of Lady Sunderland. The elder countess was particularly anxious to display her handsome daughter at the assembly, and nothing could exceed her anger and chagrin at the younger woman's obstinacy. By afternoon the quarrel waxed so hot that Betty pleaded illness and went to bed, as a last resort, and stayed there, too, in spite of her mother's rage. Lady Sunderland, who in a passion could forget herself and use such language as only a fishwife or a woman of fashion could command, heaped recriminations on her daughter, and screamed and chattered and swore a little, too, for my lady was a pupil — and an apt one — of the court of Charles the Second. But Lady Betty was more than her match in wit and strength of will, and she won the victory.

My Lady Clancarty

When the hour for the ball arrived, her mother had to go with Lord Spencer and leave her daughter calmly ensconced in bed, defiant and triumphant. The Countess of Sunderland's chair was brought to the inn door, preceded by the link-boys with their lanthorns, and the lady was helped into it by her son, her very headdress quivering with rage and the color of the paint upon her cheeks enhanced by the flush of anger.

"The minx!" she exclaimed to Spencer, "I don't believe she's ill at all; it's nothing but her obstinacy and some fancy she has about that scapegrace, Clancarty. The saucy little baggage defied me, and looked as lovely as any nymph all the time! Your father must see to it — there must be a divorce from that creature, or next thing, she'll run away to France with him; she's equal to it, the little wretch!"

"Never, madam," said Spencer solemnly, "I'd see her dead first — before she disgraced the family!"

If the truth be told, this was too much for the countess; she gasped and stared uneasily at this self-righteous young man, who certainly resembled her as little as he did the versatile and unprincipled Sunderland.

Meanwhile, the invalid at the Lion's Head

My Lord Clancarty

had miraculously recovered and dressed herself with the assistance of Alice, who viewed the whole proceeding with amazement and distinct disapproval. She knew that Lady Clancarty had not been ill and she looked upon the stratagem as an unworthy deceit. Her mistress, reading her as easily as an open book, understood the girl's mood and said nothing to her. Instead, she set her the task of lighting the candles in the room where she received her guests, and seeing that the servant replenished the wood fire and drew the curtains. Finally she came in herself, a charming figure in pink, with a single rose in her hair. Finding everything arranged to her satisfaction, she dismissed her attendant and waited quite alone, standing before the hearth and gazing pensively at the fire. Though she was outwardly calm, a storm was raging in her bosom. He had asked for this interview and he was coming, and now she shrank from the thought of this meeting with sudden trepidation. She bit her lip and stared into the fire, but her hands quivered and her heart beat almost to suffocation. She had thought of this moment many, many times — girlish day-dreams of her lover and husband coming to claim her — but she had never pictured anything like this. A proscribed rebel,

My Lady Clancarty

who was forced to see her secretly, and the man himself—ah, that was it! Here was a powerful personality that she had never imagined; there was something in his eyes, his voice that drew her to him with so strange a fascination that it frightened her. She knew just how he would look, just the flash in his gray eyes, the deep tones of his voice, before she saw him enter. She struggled with herself when she heard his tread in the hall and knew it—and she was listening with strained ears, when the door was opened for him. But Lady Betty was not one to show the white feather; she drew her breath hard and straightened herself, and then she opened that fan of hers—a beautiful affair from one of the India houses in London—and she swayed it to and fro shading her face.

Lord Clancarty came into the room with a springing step, his face flushed and his eyes shining; he wore, indeed, the air of a conquering hero. But, almost at the threshold, he halted and stood gazing at Betty in amazement. She was still standing before the fire, slowly wielding the fan, her face averted, pale, cold, her chin up. Nothing could have been more frozen than her attitude; it chilled even his ardor, and he stood, with his hat in his

My Lord Clancarty

hand, and for a few moments there was silence. Then Lady Betty broke it.

"I received your note, my lord," she said, in an icy tone.

"The devil you did, madam," he said, "I should think that I had sent you a cartel — from your manner of receiving me! Faith, my lady, you seem marvellous glad to see your husband."

A shadow of a smile flickered in Betty's eyes.

"A welcome kept too long grows cold, sir," she replied.

He took a step toward her, tossing his hat upon the table, and something in his face made her back closer to the fire; he saw it and stopped, smiling.

"You do not believe in me," he said reproachfully; "I would have wooed you and won you, dear, but for the cruelty of fate. I am your husband," he added softly; "does not that plead a little?"

"A childish contract, a mere formal mockery," replied Lady Betty, cool as ice, looking at him across the candles, "I should not dream of being bound by it — no generous man would base any claim upon it, sir;" she told this falsehood glibly, though her very soul shook under his glance.

My Lady Clancarty

The blood rushed up to his forehead.

“Have I based any claim upon it, madam?” he asked proudly.

This blow went home; her ladyship turned crimson and bit her lips in silence.

“Nay, you do not know me,” he said, and his rich Irish voice deepened and softened with restrained emotion; “I would scorn to base any claim upon a tie not freely made — for you were a child — but I thought,” he paused, searching her face keenly, “I thought your husband might win your heart, my lady.”

She gave him a quick look, and then her eyes avoided his and she struggled hard for self-mastery. If he had known it then — one word more, one step farther — but he waited for her reply, and the wayward mood came back upon her.

“Fourteen years, my lord,” she said, shrugging her shoulders, “and then, you plead your title to my — my affections!”

“Fourteen years,” he repeated slowly, “fourteen years less of paradise, Betty, is not that enough punishment for me?”

She averted her face and did not reply. He came a step nearer and she felt his hand closing over hers.

“Would you have come but for the Peace

My Lord Clancarty

of Ryswick?" she asked, looking up into his eyes.

He smiled. "If we had won before," he replied, "if we had only won — I would have come, a victor, to claim you. Betty, I did not know you, I had never pictured you as you are! I went to Althorpe like a thief in disguise, to see you, and from that moment in the greenwood, I loved you — I love you madly now!" he whispered, and she felt his breath warm on her cheek.

She did not dare to look at him now.

"I love you," he said softly, "and — does my wife care nothing for me?"

Before she realized it he had his arm around her, his lips almost touched hers. Then she broke away from him, her eyes flashing, her face on fire.

"You go too far, sir," she cried angrily, "you say you base no claim upon our relation, and then — and then —" she stopped, her breast heaving, tears in her eyes.

He smiled. "And then? I would have kissed you," he said, "by Saint Patrick, I would give a kingdom — if it were mine — to kiss you, but I will not force you to it, Lady Clancarty!"

"You dare not!" she flashed at him angrily.

My Lady Clancarty

His eyes blazed. "I dare not?" he repeated, "forsooth, madam, that is an ill word to use to Donough Macarthy; I dare — anything! But I want no woman against her will. I would n't give that, madam," he snapped his fingers, "not that — for you without your heart!"

She was silent for a moment, but the expression of his face, his masterful manner, stung her pride and angered her.

"You are a proscribed traitor, my lord," she said angrily, "how can you ask me to share your life?"

His look withered her.

"Madam," he said, "I ask for your love. No loving woman ever thought of valuing her husband by his misfortunes. I am a beggar and an exile, my lady, and I have done wrong to sue for your heart. I see that — like your father — you value men by their positions in the world!"

Her face was crimson. "You insult me, my lord!" she cried passionately.

"Did you not insult me?" he asked bitterly; "do you not infer that I only ask you because I am broken in fortune and name — a bankrupt? But look you, my lady, I cringe at no rich man's door for his daughter!" he

My Lord Clancarty

paused, and his red-hot anger suddenly turned to ashes ; his eyes dwelt on her with an affection that moved her deeply ; “ I love you,” he said, “ I would have sued for your heart on my knees — but, madam, I will take scorn from no one — not even from you. In exile, in illness, in suffering, I have often thought of you — your face shone like a star upon me, your pictured face, Betty, and when I saw you, ah,” he paused, looking into the fire, “ I love you still — but you are Lord Sunderland’s daughter. He has scorned the ruined Irishman, and you — you scorn me too, it seems. Farewell, my lady, you are my wife — but henceforth I seek you no more. If you love me, ’twill be for you to tell the exile, the proscribed traitor, so.”

Betty threw out her hands wildly.

“ You wrong me, sir,” she protested faintly ; “ I did not mean to reproach you with poverty ; I — I spoke in anger.”

But he stood like a statue.

“ You do not love me,” he said, his deep voice quivering, “ and mark you, Lady Clancarty, I will have nothing but your love — your love ; I shall take no less ! I love you, you are my very own, my wife,” his tone was masterful, “ but I, who love you, I will not

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sue for your heart. I am too poor, madam, I will not ask you to share an exile's lot, you are too great a lady," he took his hat from the table and bowed profoundly.

He longed to catch her in his arms and kiss her, but he was too proud ; he bowed and she courtesied low, and in the dim light of the candles he could not see the pallor of her face, he could not hear her heart beat. Pride met pride.

"I bid you farewell, my lady," he said, and bowed himself out of the room.

And Betty fell upon her knees beside the table and laid her proud head down upon it and wept as though her heart would break.

"Oh," she sobbed to herself, "I am a beast, a heartless little beast," and then she wept again, this being the manner of women.

And she did not see the door of Lady Sunderland's room open noiselessly, upon a tiny crack, stay so a moment, and then close again as silently. She neither saw nor heard it in the passion of her grief.

CHAPTER XVII

AT THE TOY-SHOP

THE star of Lady Clancarty's fortune for that week at Newmarket was an evil star. For it was the very day after that fateful interview with her husband, a day that dawned after a night of repentance and good resolutions, that another straw turned the tide against reconciliation. Lady Sunderland's party had spent the forenoon at the theatre, and on their way to the race-course they stopped at Master Drake's toy-shop on the promenade; a shop famous not only for the toys and trinkets of a kind that amused the women of fashion, but for the tea that he served in a little room in the rear, which was divided into stalls like those in coffee-rooms. Here both beaux and belles congregated to sip tea, and gossip, and raffle for some choice toy from India.

The shop, recently replenished by its wily proprietor, was a glittering mass of novelties

My Lady Clancarty

and almost vied with the famous India houses of London in its collection of Oriental articles. Here were hideous dragons of porcelain, snuff-boxes with jewelled lids, and canes of the latest fashion, jars of snuff and pulvillo, and bottles of rare perfumes, gilded flasks of cut glass, boxes of patches ready cut for the cheeks and brows of the beauties, ivory combs and fans of wonderful and beautiful design, delicate tea-sets and many bits of Dutch china, first accepted because of the example of Queen Mary, gloves and laces and even India shawls. Here, too, were toys, jewelry, cogged dice, masks, dominoes and vizors, and here, as in London, the discreet toy-men handed *billets-doux* back and forth and made appointments between the beaux and belles; and here many a meeting took place, and many a momentous question was settled for all time, either in the toy-shop itself or in the stalls behind it, where the world of fashion reigned.

My Lady Sunderland and my Lady Dacres were no sooner there than they were plunged in the excitement of a raffle for a hideous china dragon, and almost came to blows for the possession of the treasure. But Lady Betty, quite indifferent, stood apart talking to a group of gay young people near the entrance. My

At the Toy-Shop

Lord of Devonshire was there, and the Marquis of Hartington, and in their train, young Mackie, upon whom the Countess of Clancarty smiled ; and there, too, was Lord Savile, who had been at her elbow all the morning and would have declared his passion for her had he dared. And she was in a reckless mood ; her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed, and she laughed and jested, though her heart ached.

The king was well enough to be present at the race in the afternoon and all the world was agog to see him. The throng at the toy-shop grew greater as the people stopped on their way from the theatre to the track, and the group at the door grew larger with Lady Betty in the centre of it, sparkling and flushing and laughing, the picture of a beautiful coquette.

“All the great men go up to Parliament next Wednesday, Lady Clancarty,” said Mr. Benham, “and we shall see your brother shine as the bright particular star of the Whig firmament.”

“A star—a constellation rather ; the Little Bear of the party,” laughed Lady Betty roguishly ; “what will you do this season, my Lord of Devonshire ?”

The great man smiled benevolently upon the beauty.

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"Whatever your heart desires, madam," he replied gallantly.

Betty flashed a quick look at him.

"Will you indeed, my lord?" she asked archly; "what if I should ask a great boon — even half thy kingdom?"

Devonshire looked at the beautiful, flushed face and marvelled.

"Even that, dear Lady Betty," he replied courteously, "even that."

"I have your word, my lord," she said, and laughed softly.

"And mine," murmured Savile, in her ear, "you have not asked — but it is the whole of my kingdom."

"Ah," she said, and gave him a roguish glance, "I do remember — but not your entire trust in my decision!"

He blushed crimson. "I upheld my honor then," he murmured, looking into her eyes; "my heart is yours — to break at will!"

Her expression changed, changed so sharply that he looked around, following the direction of her glance, and saw the face of the man he hated — the Irish Jacobite. Lord Clancarty stood just within the door, his eyes holding Betty's against her will. Savile heard her quick gasp, saw her hands flutter, and he thrust

At the Toy-Shop

himself between with a black look at Clancarty. But Lady Betty, trying to collect herself, met young Mackie's eyes and saw that he knew. The blood rushed to her temples but she laughed.

"My lord," she said to Devonshire, "does your horse run to-day? or my Lord Savile's gray mare?"

Devonshire smiled. "Both, my lady," he said, "and Savile will be a bankrupt before night — in all but love, I suspect."

"A poor substitute for a full purse, my lord," she said recklessly, without taking thought of her words until she felt rather than saw Clancarty's grave look at her. "I mean," she stammered, "in my Lord Savile's case —" and then she stopped, covered with confusion.

Never had Lady Betty made so many mistakes, but young Mackie came valiantly to her aid.

"Have you heard the rumor that the King of Spain is dying?" he asked innocently.

"He has been dying for a long time," remarked Mr. Benham laughing, "and the King of France and the emperor are dying of anxiety."

"Precisely, and but for our king there would be a war for the succession within a week,"

My Lady Clancarty

said Devonshire thoughtfully; "as it is, the peace of Europe hangs by a thread — the narrow thread of a sickly man's life."

"Yes," put in Betty, herself again, "and Parliament is for cutting down the military establishment."

Devonshire smiled. "The people do not love a standing army, Lady Clancarty," he replied.

"No," she responded quickly, "they would perhaps prefer a French fleet in the Thames."

"Some of 'em would," said Savile sullenly.

"No, sir, you are wrong," declared Devonshire, "no Englishman would — not even a Jacobite — when it came to that. You remember how the southern counties rose to repulse Tourville's squadron in '90?"

"You are in the right, my lord; no true Briton has ever thought of seeing his country under the heel of Louis," said Clancarty, suddenly taking part in the conversation.

"Some traitors — who are not Englishmen — would, Mr. Trevor," sneered Savile, with an emphasis on the name.

The disguised earl shot a fierce glance at him and smiled dangerously.

"Little dogs snarl when they dare not bite, my lord," he said suavely.

At the Toy-Shop

"Since the famous peace, sir, all the renegades and cutpurses talk loud," replied Savile, in an insolent undertone.

"Cowards always insult men in the presence of women," retorted Clancarty smiling.

At this moment they were interrupted by a movement of the throng, some passing out, and my Lady Sunderland, having won her Chinese dragon from all competitors, bore down upon them flushed with triumph, and the chairs were called.

Betty stood a moment at the threshold. Clancarty was beside her, his face quite grave. She looked up; the impulse was in her heart to speak and their eyes met but his were cold.

"You choose wisely, my lady," he said, in a bitter undertone, "a full purse is better than a beggarly love, it seems."

She flushed crimson.

Savile thrust himself forward and held out his hand.

"Permit me to put you in your chair, my lady," he said, grace and courtesy personified; handsome, well dressed, courtly, the very picture of a deferential lover.

"A thousand thanks, my lord," she said sweetly, putting her hand in his.

He put her in her chair and the procession

My Lady Clancarty

started, Lady Sunderland screaming to the toy-man about the careful packing of her dragon, and Betty looked out smiling, more charming than ever.

A moment afterwards, Clancarty and Savile faced each other.

"This very evening would be propitious, my lord," said the Irishman coolly, "the same spot, I believe, and the same seconds?"

"At your service, sir," said Savile fiercely, "and damn you, I mean to kill you!"

"I'm beholden to you, my lord," replied the earl, and laughed as he walked away.

"Ah, Betty," he said to himself, as he passed on toward the Lion's Head, "is a coquette worth dying for?" and then, after a moment, he hummed two lines of the old song:—

"A second life, a soul anew,
My dark Rosaleen!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DUEL

“DENIS,” said Lord Clancarty laughing, “in five minutes they will be here and in ten I may be dead.”

“Divil a bit, my lord,” said Denis hopefully, “unless you are kilt intirely.”

But there was a strange look in the faithful Irishman’s eyes, a look of mute suffering. Lord Clancarty slipped a ring off his finger and gave it to him.

“Denis,” he said, in an even voice, quiet and cheerful, “if I fall, take that to Lady Clancarty and tell her that she is free.”

“Yes, my lord,” replied Denis, in a dull tone, not looking up.

“Even if I do not fall, you will take it to her with that message,” continued the earl, looking across the meadow at the approaching figures of his opponent and their seconds and, perhaps, his thoughts dwelt on that morning when Lady Betty put the swords aside. “We

My Lady Clancarty

will leave here to-morrow, Denis, or — ” he shrugged his shoulders, “ there is little money left.”

“ Faix, we ’ll have to see th’ Jews again, me lord,” said the man dolefully ; “ they ’re afther bein’ me most familiar friends, the jewels ! ”

Clancarty laughed.

A moment later he was bowing with ceremonious courtesy to Lord Savile and Mr. Benham. Young Mackie came up, too, bringing a fourth person.

“ I brought a surgeon, gentlemen,” he said half apologetically ; “ Dr. Radcliffe, my Lord Savile and — Mr. Trevor.”

Dr. Radcliffe, a large man wearing a rich but old-fashioned dress and a huge periwig, bowed gravely. He had a large practice and was famous for a freedom of speech that had once gone so far as to offend King William.

“ I have to thank you, gentlemen, for furnishing me with patients,” he remarked dryly ; “ let me beg you not to be too thorough.”

“ ’Tis to be to the finish, doctor,” said Clancarty coolly, that dangerous smile on his lips.

“ A devilish poor plan,” said the doctor, with a shrug ; “ it will take more than my skill to resuscitate a corpse.”

The Duel

“We shall not expect a miracle — even from the great Dr. Radcliffe,” replied Clancarty.

Mr. Benham and young Mackie were measuring the ground. Denis, in the meantime, turned his face away and looked toward the setting sun; it may be that he was wishing for the shoes he wore at Boyne, but it is not recorded. The clouds overhead were red and the level meadows bathed in the slanting rays of light; long shadows fell across the scene; a bird sang in the grove of limes.

The two men stepped into the open, stripped of coats and waistcoats, their white shirts showing vividly against the green background. Lord Savile was flushed, but Clancarty's face was singularly serene. The signal was given; their weapons flashed, and there was the sudden ring of steel on steel.

Ah, 't was a wonderful duel; afterwards, men spoke of it as a kind of triumph in the art of duelling, and Dr. Radcliffe described it to the Princess Anne and the Duke of Marlborough. Clancarty was an Irishman and therefore a born fighter, though the Englishmen of that day thought all Irishmen cowards because the poor, barefoot peasants ran before the trained battalions of the English and Dutch. Moreover, the young earl had served

My Lady Clancarty

a long apprenticeship on the Continent ; and in France duelling was the breath of men's nostrils. Clancarty fought that day recklessly and beautifully ; he was lithe and graceful as a panther, with a wrist like steel and an eye that never faltered, and he had met no mean antagonist ; my Lord Savile was counted one of the best swordsmen in the Guards, and hating his opponent he fought with fury.

Steel ground on steel and the sparks flew, thrust and parry, point and blade, stroke on stroke. The others watched in breathless admiration ; they even forgot their individual interest in the struggle and stood gaping like schoolboys. Both men were tired, yet both played on, evenly matched, relentless and reckless. There was a sudden thrust over Savile's guard and then, in an instant, Lord Clancarty's sword snapped at the hilt, just as Savile's crossed it and passed into his breast. It was over in a moment, and he lay full length on the turf and the blood was flowing from a cut in his antagonist's neck.

“ Oh, my lord, my own dear lord ! ” wailed Denis, falling on his knees, and even Lord Savile's face was white as chalk.

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In the dimly lighted hall of the inn that

The Duel

night, Denis, with a lined, drawn face, white as a dead man's, laid something in Lady Betty's hand.

"Me lord's greetings to me lady," he said in a strained voice; "I was to give ye that an' say, 'Ye are quite free'!"

Lady Betty stared at him wildly. She read a message of calamity in his face.

"What is it? What has happened?" she cried.

But the Irishman only gave her one look of deep reproach and plunged down the stairs into the hubbub of the court.

Clancarty's ring and "you are free"!

She swayed so that Alice Lynn, who came running toward her, caught her in her arms and almost carried her to her room.

CHAPTER XIX

MY LORD SAVILE REAPS HIS REWARD

LADY SUNDERLAND was, as usual, playing cards with her crony. The game was gleek, and Lady Dacres was determined to be avenged for the loss of the Chinese dragon — grinning hideously from the mantel — and she was betting and cheating desperately. Dr. Radcliffe made a third, and Lord Spencer looked on — politely bored.

The tapers burned brightly and Lady Sunderland simpered and nodded her head at Dr. Radcliffe, though she would not have tolerated his society if he had not been physician to the Princess Anne and she hoped to extract some royal gossip from him.

The host of the Lion's Head came in himself, with a servant bearing a large loving-cup of silver. The good man was flushed and obsequious and plainly out of sorts, keeping a weather eye on Lord Spencer.

My Lord Savile reaps his Reward

"Will your ladyship be pleased to try this hypocras?" he said, bowing low; "'t is of my own brewing and I'll warrant it the finest in the county — I had the rule from the keeper of Man's," and he rubbed his fat hands together unctuously.

Lady Dacres tasted first and rolled her eyes up.

"Ambrosia!" she said, "oh, 'la — I mean nectar, don't I, Lord Spencer?" and she tittered like a girl of sixteen.

Dr. Radcliffe drank some deliberately.

"Better than the brandy you sent us this afternoon," he remarked, with a twinkle in his eye.

The man grew crimson. "'T is for a better purpose," he stammered.

The great physician raised his eyebrows.

"Chut! that's a strange notion," he said bluntly; "it is not a good purpose, then, to save life?"

The innkeeper worked his hands nervously.

"I've heard strange things since, your worship," he faltered, his eye on the young nobleman.

"You harbor strange guests," remarked Spencer sternly, his cold glance transfixing the little man.

My Lady Clancarty

"I can't always know their antecedents, my lord," said the host, redder than ever, and in an agony of uneasiness.

"What's the matter?" asked Lady Sunderland, "you look as if you'd seen a ghost. What in the wide world are you hatching now, Spencer?"

"Oh, nothing of importance," he replied coolly; "the Lion's Head is turning Jacobite, that's all."

"Mercy on us!" ejaculated Lady Sunderland, with pious horror, "I thought 't was a noted Whig house — and the king still in Newmarket, too."

"Indeed, madam — your ladyship, I do protest," put in the landlord.

"Tut, tut!" said Dr. Radcliffe, waving him aside, "we'll excuse you. A dead Jacobite's no great matter."

"A dead Jacobite?" screamed Lady Dacres shrilly; "you make me faint! Here man, another glass of what-d'-ye-call-it? — hypocrite?" and she drank it with a sigh, fanning herself.

Spencer frowned, rising and walking to the window, and apparently looking out into the black night beyond. The landlord, taking advantage of his opportunity, slid out of the door with alacrity.

My Lord Savile reaps his Reward

"There has been a duel, madam," explained Radcliffe, shuffling the cards, "in the long meadow — and the provost-marshal may look into it later."

"Dear, dear," simpered Lady Sunderland, looking over her cards, "was any one killed? I'll raise the wager to nine shillings — oh, la — the doctor has a mourneval!" she added, aside to Lady Dacres.

"A young Irishman, Trevor, was desperately wounded," replied Radcliffe; "a splendid swordsman, but his blade broke."

"What!" exclaimed Lady Sunderland, "that charming young man?" she shook her head mournfully; "his legs were beautifully symmetrical."

"Did he lose one?" tittered Lady Dacres, clutching at her cards with greedy fingers; "you said nine shillings more?"

Lady Sunderland nodded; she held three kings and hoped to win. "The doctor has Tiddy and Towser both," she whispered behind her fan.

At the moment, Betty came into the room. Her face was pale but she showed no signs of the tempest.

"He had an ugly wound, madam," Dr. Radcliffe said, playing a card leisurely; "his chances

My Lady Clancarty

of life amount to that," the physician made a significant gesture.

"Dear me, Betty, come here and listen to this awful tale," said Lady Sunderland; "your friend, Mr. Trevor, killed — oh, by the way, who did it, doctor?"

Lord Spencer had turned from the window.

"Savile," he answered coldly, "and he did well. It seems he suspected him — thought him a disguised Jacobite and has called him out twice to kill him — this time he has probably done it. And now it is rumored that the fellow is one of those excepted in the late act of Parliament. The country is flooded with these rascals, constantly menacing its safety and the king's life."

"How romantic," sighed Lady Sunderland, throwing her cards; "there," she crowed, "three kings — Meg, I've got you!"

Lady Dacres replied by tossing her cards on the table with a scream of triumph.

"Oh, confound it!" cried Lady Sunderland furiously; "the hussy has a gleek of aces! You're an old cheat, Meg!"

Lady Dacres laughed immoderately, gathering in the coin with eager fingers. The other old gambler eyed her with fury, her headdress quivering. Dr. Radcliffe, who knew it was the

My Lord Savile reaps his Reward

fashion to fleece the men at table, looked on indifferently, keeping up his talk with Spencer.

“I cannot see why Savile had to kill him for a Jacobite,” he remarked, deliberately taking snuff from an elaborate box with the arms of the Princess of Denmark on it; “the provost-marshal can see to them. We all know that the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended on account of the plots against the king’s life. Savile’s motive must have been more human than that, my lord.”

Spencer shrugged his shoulders.

“He was doing a high duty, sir,” he replied pompously, “he was ridding his country of a traitor. Savile’s a fine fellow.”

“He’s a murderer!” said Betty sharply.

She stood with her hand on the back of her mother’s chair and her tall figure seemed to tower. The doctor gave her a shrewd glance.

“You love heroics, Elizabeth,” her brother replied with a drawl, but his face turned white—a danger signal.

Betty did not look at him; she fixed her eyes on the doctor.

“Will he die?” she asked, and her voice was perfectly controlled.

Radcliffe was thoughtful and did not answer for a moment.

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"There is one chance in a thousand," he said, "there would have been more, but this political stir and hubbub has compelled them to spirit him away, and a journey —" he shrugged his shoulders; "I should say six feet of earth, madam, would end it."

She drew her breath sharply; to her all the candles in the room seemed to be revolving in a death-dance.

"He ought to die," said Spencer piously, "a Jacobite and a renegade. By Saint Thomas, we're well rid of him!"

"La, how romantic it is!" Lady Sunderland said, shuffling her cards and glaring at her simpering rival.

Betty walked past them and out into the anteroom, where she met Lord Savile leaning on Mr. Benham's arm. His neck was bound up and swathed in lace, and one arm was in a sling. He bowed low with a white face and languishing eyes.

"Here's a brave fellow half killed for love of you, my lady," said Mr. Benham, with gallantry.

Betty halted; tall and straight as an arrow, her eyes sparkling. No one anticipated the lightning.

Savile smiled. "Dear Lady Clancarty," he

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said, in a weak voice, "I am your humblest servant."

"You are a murderer, sir," she replied, in a terrible tone; "let me never see your face again."

And she swept on and left them standing there in blank amazement.

In her own room she fell on Alice's neck in a passion of tears.

"O Alice, Alice!" she cried, "I have driven him to his death."

And Alice — who had heard all that evening, in the agony of her ladyship's first grief and terror — Alice clasped her close, forgetting the great distance between them and remembering only her devotion to this beautiful and wilful creature.

"I did not know you cared so much," she said, "I never thought that he might be Lord Clancarty."

"Ah, I felt it from the first, Alice," Lady Betty said; "there was something in his bearing toward me — his tone — I knew he was my husband, I felt it!"

"And yet — and yet — my lady, you sent him away!" the girl murmured, in a tone of wonder.

My Lady Clancarty

Betty's head dropped. "Yes, he has gone!" she said, "gone — my own true love — and desperately wounded, too!"

"Yes, gone," said Alice, venturing on a tearful remonstrance; "I can't understand you, my lady, I can't indeed! One moment, you are all tenderness for the poor gentleman, the next, you are driving him into exile with your coldness."

"Exile? Oh, no, no!" cried Lady Betty passionately, "he shall not go without me. I love him, my girl, I love him — can't you understand? 'T was that which made me feel so — feel that he only claimed me, did not woo me. You are as dull as any man, Alice," she walked to and fro, beating her hands together, "my love, my poor love!" she sighed and then suddenly her mood changed, she raised her head resolutely.

"My hood and cloak, Alice," she said quickly, "and my vizard."

"Madam, 't is very late," remonstrated the girl.

Betty stamped her foot. "I am your mistress," she said, "obey me — you forget your place."

"Nay, my lady," said Alice sadly, "I do not forget — but I love you!"

My Lord Savile reaps his Reward

Her generous-hearted mistress repented in a moment.

“Forgive me,” she said gently, “I know it, Alice, but I cannot be advised — I must find him.” She stopped, her face white under the hood that the girl was adjusting: “O Alice, he may be dying!”

CHAPTER XX

LADY BETTY'S SEARCH

THOUGH the stars were out, the night was black as pitch and the courtyard of the inn was only lighted by the broad bands of red that flared across it from the gaping doors of hall and kitchen, serving to make the surrounding darkness more palpable. So it was that Lady Betty and Alice — cloaked and hooded — nearly stumbled against young Mackie, and would not have known him but for his exclamation of impatience. He took them for kitchen wenches, and when Lady Betty cried out his name, he stopped short with a gasp of sheer amazement.

“Oh, Sir Edward, ’t was you — of all men — I wanted to see !” she cried.

Poor Mackie, if he could have taken her at her word ! But, alas, her tone belied her words and his heart sank drearily.

“You here, my lady !” he exclaimed, “what has happened ? I am at your service ; I pray you —”

Lady Betty's Search

But she cut him short.

"Where is he?" she whispered.

She mentioned no name, but the young man understood.

"His servant removed him two hours ago, Lady Clancarty," he replied quietly, "whither, I know not. The man, a wild Irish clown, would not trust me, though, 'pon my honor, I meant to serve — Mr. Trevor," his voice faltered so at the name that she was again assured that he had divined their secret and a weight slipped from her heart.

"Was he dying?" she asked very low, but the tremor in her voice thrilled her listener.

"I do not know," he stammered, "I pray not, my lady, for he is a brave man."

She laid her hand on his arm.

"Thank you," she said simply, "he is my husband."

Young Mackie bent his head and kissed her fingers reverently.

"He also trusted me, madam," he said, and she did not see the pain in the boy's eyes; "I shall endeavor to deserve it."

But Betty was not thinking of him.

"I must find him," she said shivering, "I must find him!" and a sob choked her voice.

Young Mackie was silent. From the kitchen

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came the hubbub of voices, the clatter of dishes ; while, looking over Betty's shoulder, he saw Spencer and Savile cross the main hall, arm in arm, their heads together. Sir Edward knew well enough that Savile had tried to kill Clancarty and he set his teeth, for he saw her cloaked figure sway and quiver in the passion of emotion that shook her. He was a generous fellow and he forgot himself.

"I will try to find him, my lady," he said in a low tone, glancing cautiously at the hall door, "he can't be very far away, he could not travel ; that man has hidden him somewhere because of the stir made by the duel — I think his identity was very near discovery."

"I know it," she said, "but how to find him — oh, Sir Edward, I must do it ! He — he may be in need of a surgeon — of care — of everything !" she broke off wildly, and then, "Come, Alice, we must go on."

But he detained her. "Whither, madam ?" he asked gravely, "not in a vain search — at night — for — for him ?"

She drew herself up proudly. "Do you think I will let my husband die thus ? — and stir no finger to help him ?" she asked bitterly.

"Then you will let me go with you," he said quietly, taking his place beside her.

Lady Betty's Search

She hesitated and quickly assented. "If you will," she replied, "since it is late and we are only two women — but we must make haste," and she ran down the old stone steps into the garden, taking the very path she had walked with Clancarty. Mackie and Alice followed her silently, though both were convinced of the fruitlessness of such an errand at such an hour.

But the night had worn on many hours more and the moon had risen before Betty acknowledged that her quest was vain. Meanwhile, young Mackie had patiently searched in every tavern and inn in Newmarket; he had invaded all the alleys and byways, all the nooks and corners, and inquired of grooms and porters and stable-men — but to no purpose. Denis had covered his retreat with more skill than Sir Edward had looked for. If the truth be told, the Irishman was no new hand at the business and he understood it well, having followed Lord Clancarty in his adventurous life, from Dublin, and later in a wild career on the Continent when the gay young nobleman had kept pace with his fellow exiles of high birth and slim purses, but unlimited daring. It was not the first duel nor the first cause for flight, and Denis had spirited the wounded man away

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and left no sign. Even Betty, determined and vigilant as she was, was forced to acknowledge herself defeated, and she walked drearily back to the Lion's Head with an aching heart. He believed her indifferent to him — would he ever send her a message or a token again? Never ; she was sure of it, and she bowed her head in dejection — Lady Betty, who was never crestfallen. She and Alice crept in, at last, by the garden way and fled to her apartments in no little trepidation, but they fancied themselves safe when they found that Lady Sunderland had gone to bed, to get her beauty sleep, and the woman, Melissa, slept in her room that night, in the absence of the countess' own attendant.

Lady Betty did not sleep nor did she open her heart to the faithful girl who was nearly as grieved as she was to see her trouble. She knelt for hours by the window looking out over the moonlit garden where the shadows were black between the hedgerows. It was a night of agony ; to know that he might be dying — dying with hard thoughts of her indifference — almost within reach of her and yet so far. She was his wife, she thought with sharp pain, and yet he could not send her word — and she did not deserve it. He was

Lady Betty's Search

dying, because Savile had been determined to kill him : he had divined the secret, he was resolved to remove her husband. Betty saw it all ; she had wrung some admissions from Mackie, the rest she knew by intuition.

She had a high spirit — all her life she had had her way at last, in spite of her heartless, frivolous mother and her selfish, brilliant father, and this was a trial hard to bear. Clancarty was the first man who had not done her homage, who met her on her own ground and demanded that she should love him. Perhaps it was that which won her ; howbeit, her eyes were dim with tears as she looked out of the window and looked, indeed, until the sun rose on another day.

CHAPTER XXI

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

IT was a small and desolate room, with bare rafters overhead, and the wind rattling fiercely at the old casements, while Denis was trying to keep a sickly fire of green wood alive upon the hearth. The floor was of stone, cold and bare, save for a few rushes strewn beside the truckle bed, and there was no light but that from the sputtering logs and one poor taper; there were only two chairs and one small table in the room beside the bed, but all was scrupulously clean, though barren and chilly beyond description.

And on the bed lay Lord Clancarty, his cheeks flushed with fever, his hair dishevelled, his eyes shining, and his hands ever and anon clutching at the coverlet fiercely whenever any chance movement gave him pain.

If the aspect of the place was poor, it was also desolately lonely; no sound reached their ears but the rustling of the wind in the tree

The Valley of the Shadow

tops without and the creaking of the old building itself. It was an old farmhouse, the dwelling of the widow of a Jacobite — for England was honey-combed with conspiracies and counter-conspiracies — and this woman, a rigid believer in the old order of things, had the courage to take the wounded nobleman under her roof; she could give him shelter, but as for comforts she had none to give. Here, too, with her connivance, Denis smuggled a young surgeon, one of the faithful, to tend the wound that the famous Radcliffe had dressed with his own hands on the field. The young practitioner shared the doubts of his senior, and shook his head gravely; the wounded man might live, but he was quite as likely to die. So, with these gloomy predictions, and the still more gloomy aid of the solemn visaged widow, Denis was left with almost an empty purse to guard and nurse the feverish patient.

Stricken with profound anxieties, the faithful Irishman fed the fire, kneeling before it, his back toward his master, to hide a face that betrayed his feelings too plainly. On the table lay Lord Clancarty's cloak and plumed hat and the hilt of the sword that had served him so ill and there, too, was his pistol primed and

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ready for use. He lay watching Denis, fever flushed but in his senses, though more than once that night his mind had wandered.

The stillness of the place was broken by the stamping of a horse's feet at no great distance.

"What is that?" the wounded man asked sharply.

"Our horses, sir," replied Denis, still kneeling at the hearth; "they're in the shed outside, me lord, an' indade 't is fitter fer thim than fer yer lordship here."

Clancarty smiled sadly. "It matters little, Denis, and is like to matter less. How far are we from Newmarket?"

"Not far, sir, this house stands off th' road ter Bishop-Stortford, a half mile loike from the road, in a patch of timber; a very pretty hiding-place—I've hed me eye on it fer a couple of wakes."

"You thought I would come to this, then? Ah, Denis, I fear you know me too well, old rogue!"

"Indade, sir, I've known ye from a boy in Munster, an' I nivir knew ye to take care of yerself. Faix, it's a broken head ye'll be afther havin' more often thin a whole wan."

The Valley of the Shadow

Clancarty laughed softly, his feverish eyes on the fire.

“Denis,” he said dreamily, “do you remember the wild rides over the green fields of Ireland?”

Denis bent low over the hearth fanning the blaze, fighting the damp and the green wood.

“I’m afther remimbering, yer lordship,” he replied hoarsely.

“It’s a long way back to those days,” said Lord Clancarty; “the skies were blue then. I’m a poor devil now, Denis, and like to die —” his voice died away, more from faintness than emotion, and after awhile he asked for water.

Denis rose and gave it to him, lifting his head as gently as a woman, and as he took the glass from the wounded man’s lips he turned his own head away — but not soon enough, a hot tear fell on the earl’s forehead.

“Saint Patrick, Denis, I must be far gone when you weep!” Clancarty said, touched in spite of himself, “I did not know you could, you old heart of oak!”

Denis brushed the moisture from his eyes.

“I remimber an ould man in County Kerry, me lord, who nivir shid a tear until his wife was coming out of a fit, and thin he took on loike

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anny wild gossoon. He 'd bin gitting ready fer a wake an' hed ter give it all up, and whin his neighbors accused him of it, he said he nivir wept unless a person was gitting well, an' thin he wept fer joy—'t is so with me, me lord."

Lord Clancarty smiled, turning his face to the wall. He was deeply touched at the simple fellow's devotion. There was silence for awhile ; the fire crackled and leaped up the chimney, lighting up the room just in time, for the single taper sputtered and went out.

It was at this time that Lady Clancarty and Sir Edward were searching the streets of Newmarket.

Lord Clancarty turned his head wearily and looking down at his own hand remembered.

" Denis," he said in a low tone, " did you give the ring and the message to my lady ? "

Denis had his back to him again, his square sturdy outline between him and the blaze.

" Yes, me lord," he answered stolidly.

" And she ? " the fever burned on Clancarty's cheeks, his eyes shone ; " how did she take it ? "

" Very quiet loike, me lord," replied Denis bluntly, " she wanted to know what hed happened, but I dared not tell her ladyship."

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“She inquired, though? she was anxious?” asked the earl eagerly.

Denis was stubborn. “Me lord, she asked what hed happened — nothing more. She’s a great lady, sir, and as proud as anny quane.”

The wounded lover sighed and turned again to the wall: here was no consolation, and in his bitterness he called her heartless. The desolate place, his almost exhausted resources, his painful wound, all combined to shake even his proud resolution; he was lonely and he was desperate. In his fevered brain rose many visions of Betty, the beautiful, the careless, charming Betty that he had known. What heart there was beneath that beautiful exterior he did not know; but this he knew — he was an outcast from home and friends, a desperate and forsaken man and dangerously wounded. He was no novice in affairs of this kind and knew well the nature of his hurt and what lack of care would do for it. His life passed in quick review before him; its ambitions, its wild adventures, its dark spots of reckless dissipations, and now this end — this wretched, thwarted, forsaken end — creeping away like a wounded beast to die alone. It might well bring bitterness to so proud and daring a spirit as his. He cursed his fate, but it is to be feared

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that he did not pray. His religion had been a matter of convenience, like the religion of many gay young soldiers of his time. It failed him now and she failed him too, — the woman who had taken such possession of his heart and swept him out of the common way into a higher passion. He loved her — and she despised him. He groaned sharply as if in bodily pain; the faithful Irishman was at his side in a moment, but he waved him away. His soul was wrestling with despair and with hunger for the sight of her. He, a strong man and a proud one, in that hour of physical agony and loneliness, longed to see her, to hear her voice before he died — if die he must, yet he would have died rather than send for her — such was his pride.

The night wore on; the horses stamping restlessly in the shed, the wind increasing in violence until the old house creaked, quivering like a broken reed. Denis sat staring at the fire, his honest face distorted with grief and now and then a slow tear creeping down his furrowed cheek. The wound was a desperate one, and counting all the things against the patient, — exposure, lack of nursing and food and comforts, the man did not believe he would live, and he loved him like a son; he had car-

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ried him on his shoulder as a baby ; he had taught the little lad to sit his horse and use his sword, and he had followed him in Ireland, in France, in Flanders, through weal and woe — to this ! Poor Denis, he too had his night of tears and lamentations.

Toward midnight Clancarty's mind wandered a little and he babbled like a child of the green turf of Ireland and the streams where he had paddled barefoot, and of the wild birds overhead. He talked of battles and sieges and at last of her, of Betty, and Denis cursed her in his heart as their evil angel, the lodestar that had drawn the young earl to his fate. Now and then through the night the wounded man called for water, but toward morning he fell asleep, and Denis dropped on his knees, praying to all the saints to send healing on the wings of that fitful slumber.

But with the night the delirium and the weakness of spirit passed together. At day-break the earl opened his eyes and looked quietly into Denis's worn face. He smiled, the old reckless smile, if somewhat weaker and paler than usual. He groped feebly under his pillow and handed the man his purse.

“A small store, Denis,” he said, “but 't is

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yours now, to do with as you can. If I die — ah, you must even bury me here, I suppose, though I long for Irish soil to cover me! For the rest — go home, Denis, take no risks for my sake. Faith, a dead man will not need you.”

Denis said nothing, he could not; he stood staring at the floor.

Lord Clancarty laughed a little bitterly.

“Go tend the horses, man,” he said; “you saw Neerwinden — why do you stand there like a woman? Death comes but once.”

“Ah, my lord,” said Denis, and the tears ran down his cheeks, “ye shall not die.”

Clancarty turned his face to the wall lest he, too, should show weakness.

“My dark Rosaleen,
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew!
My dark Rosaleen!”

he murmured faintly,

“My own Rosaleen!”

So Denis went to tend the horses, drawing his sleeve across his eyes and hating Lady Clancarty from the bottom of his simple devoted heart.

The Valley of the Shadow

“The foine lady,” he muttered; “faix — I’d loike ter make her shid a tear or two — fer all her bright eyes an’ her red cheeks — th’ heartless colleen!”

CHAPTER XXII

“UNTIL DEATH US DO PART”

IT was nearly a week later and Lady Betty's chair was passing down the main street of Newmarket when she espied Denis at the corner of a lane that ran between a mercer's shop and Drake's. She stopped her chair, and springing from it ran after him, ran quite regardless of the people in the street who stood gaping at the charming young woman running after a groom. She overtook him at the end of the lane; they were behind the mercer's shop, and Denis started at the sight of her and stood irresolute, eying her grimly. She snatched the vizard from her face.

“Where is your master?” she demanded breathlessly, “where is Lord Clancarty?”

The Irishman shut his lips stubbornly; he did not trust the daughter of Lord Sunderland.

“Will you not tell me?” cried Betty, in distress, “I know that he is wounded — I must see him! I will not be denied! I com-

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mand you — nay,” she added, reading his inflexible face, “I beg and pray you, — give me news of him !”

Denis eyed her closely, relenting just a little, and that little was enough.

“He’s very ill,” he said sullenly.

“Is he in danger?” cried Lady Clancarty, tears gathering in her eyes, “tell me, man, tell me,” and she wrung her hands. “Can’t gold tempt-you? Take me to him !”

Denis made a strange motion ; it seemed as if he would snatch her purse and then forbore to do it, but his eyes devoured it.

“Faix, I don’t know av I can thrust ye,” he said, looking at her keenly ; “ye’ve done him harm enough already.”

“But I trust you !” cried Lady Betty, “I am your master’s wife, — take me to him. See, I will go with you alone — can’t you trust me now ?”

The man looked down yet a little while, in evident hesitation, and she watched him, trembling, not with fear, like another woman, but with hope.

“Faix, I’ll take ye,” he said bluntly, “if ye’ll go alone. Look ye, me lady, if ye be-thray him, I’d as lief kill ye as not. I love me lord !”

My Lady Clancarty

The color rose in Betty's face, softly, sweetly, her eyes shone.

"And so do I!" she said; "lead on, I will follow — and alone."

"Come, thin," he said at last, "'t is a long way an' the place is n't fit fer a foine lady, but he's there — tho', by the Virgin, I don't know what he'll say ter me fer bringing ye!"

As he spoke he cast a glance back at the chair and its bearers waiting at the mouth of the lane, the men staring after their mistress, and with them a knot of idlers who had gathered to watch the countess. Lady Clancarty turned her back upon them.

"Lead on!" she commanded, impatient and imperious.

Denis led the way down the narrow lane, out of sight of the group at the mercer's shop, and into another byway, and so on through the outskirts of Newmarket. He did not take the public road but struck across the fields, passing close to the spot where Lord Clancarty had fought the duel. Lady Betty shuddered as they approached it. They were out of sight of the last straggling houses now, crossing the meadows; the sun shone as it had upon that day when she had walked first with Clancarty, but there was more of a touch of

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autumn upon the scene. Here, beyond the light green turf, was a field of stubble, and there, in the green hedgerow, were yellow leaves; and the stream, too, that flowed across the meadows, had brown depths and shadows where the pebbles lay thickest, and the purple distance took on gray.

They had left the open and were skirting a little woodland where the dry leaves rustled overhead, and once she heard the “kourre, kourre!” of the pigeons.

Whither was he going? Lady Betty wondered. The place grew more and more solitary; they followed a path, but one so little used that briars fell across it and one of them tore her frock: but she went on fearlessly, for never did a braver heart throb in a woman's bosom. Her spirit was intrepid. She looked about her through the sparsely growing trees and saw long distances without a sign of life or habitation, and still Denis plodded on and she followed, pity and love and remorse growing in her heart at every step. Her lover and her husband in poverty and obscurity, a proscribed rebel, and she rich. Nothing could have appealed so to her full heart. The thought stung her and the tears gathered on her dark lashes.

My Lady Clancarty

As Denis had predicted, the walk was a long one, but she did not heed it, she kept steadily on behind him; and at last, through an opening in the trees, she saw two horses grazing in a little strip of greensward, and beyond, the lonely farmhouse. As her guide turned towards it Betty caught her breath and stood still—for a single moment—the place was so poor, so dark, so uninviting, and the vicinity of Newmarket swarmed with banditti; even when the king's coach took the road it had to be strongly guarded. This old, weather-stained brown house, with half its window shutters broken, the green moss on its slanting gables, and the strong, iron-bound door, with the broken stone before it, was sad and forbidding enough without the silence and the woodland shadows that enfolded it. Betty stood and stared at it apprehensively, and then she thought of Clancarty. Her hesitation was so soon over that the man, her guide, was scarcely aware of it. He went on steadily, hearing her light step rustling on the fallen leaves behind him, and at last he stopped at the door and waited.

“Is he here?” she whispered.

Denis nodded, opening the door and guiding her into the kitchen where the widow, Clancarty's hostess and nurse, stood before the

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hearth stirring a stew in a great pot that was suspended on a hook over blazing logs. At the sound of their entrance she turned sharply and stared at Lady Clancarty in grim amazement, not uttering a word. Her stern, sad face and suspicious eye sent the hot blood up under her ladyship's vizard, but even this, though it embarrassed her, could not hold her back. She stood an instant, though, in the centre of the bare kitchen, in her gay furbelows, holding up her skirts with one hand while the other involuntarily adjusted her mask. Meanwhile, the widow continued to eye her sternly, even while she stirred the broth.

Denis was quick enough to perceive the difficulty.

“’Tis Lady Clancarty,” he said bluntly to the woman, indicating Lady Betty's lovely figure with a backward sweep of the hand.

Clancarty's hostess courtesied profoundly, but the fair intruder felt that those stern eyes said plainly, “A likely story, the brazen hussy!”

“I have come to see my husband,” Betty faltered, her voice trembling a little.

“Very well, ma'am,” retorted the widow grimly, and turning her back deliberately, she began to flourish the huge spoon again.

My Lady Clancarty

The poor young wife, meanwhile, fled after Denis across the kitchen, her heart beating wildly. He was waiting in the entry and led her down the hall to the opposite side of the house, before he finally halted at a closed door and waited. At a sign from her he let her enter alone. The place was poorly lighted by small windows, and as she entered and heard the door close behind her, her heart stood still. And then —

Poor Betty, her tears blinded her; she forgot the suspicious widow. The room was so poor, so bare, so wretched; the low, dark rafters, the stone floor, the miserable furniture. And stretched on the bed lay her husband, white as death; his head turned so that he could not see her, but she saw him, saw the pallor, the wasted cheek, the helpless figure. She did not move and he had not heard her enter, he seemed to be sleeping. She took off her mask and stood waiting. What would he say? For the first time her courage failed her, her knees trembled under her. Would he hate her, and despise her for coming? She stirred and he heard the rustle and looked up. In a moment it seemed as if the sun had risen and shone full upon his face: it was glorified, but still she did not go nearer to him.

“Until Death us do Part”

“Ah,” he said, “I see it is but a dream! It has mocked me before. My fever must be upon me again, but, oh, sweet vision, stay with me this time, else I perish here of despair.”

“Can you forgive me?” she sobbed, running to him and falling on her knees beside the bed, “oh, I have suffered too, the wound that hurt you pierced me also to the heart! Forgive me!”

He put his arm around her, drawing her close, with all his feeble strength, and looking at her with hungry eyes.

“My darling!” he said tenderly, “’t is you — you in the flesh? — and you came to see me? — the beggar, the exile, the traitor —”

“Don’t, don’t!” cried Betty, in a passion of grief, “I never meant it — it was my tongue, my reckless, wicked tongue — oh, my lord, forgive me!”

He smiled; he was so weak that tears gathered in his eyes.

“What have I to forgive, ‘my own Rosa-leen’?” he asked tenderly; “I am not worthy of you — I am, indeed, an exile and a vagrant, my queen, and no mate for you.”

“You are my husband,” Betty said, blushing divinely.

My Lady Clancarty

"Betty," he whispered soft and low, "you have never kissed me!"

"I have never kissed any man, my Lord Clancarty," she replied softly, her face radiant, "I will never kiss any man — but the one I love best!"

He looked at her silently, his eyes glowing, holding her closer.

"Betty," he murmured, "do you love me? — your husband?"

Betty did not reply in words. She put her arms around his neck and kissed him tenderly, laying her soft cheek against his with a sob.

"My darling," he said, after a pause, "it is too much to ask you to leave all and follow me — too much. I am only a beggar, Betty, and an outcast!"

She looked up into his eyes and he thought her face had never been so beautiful.

"My husband," she said.

His tears wet her cheek as he kissed her again and again.

"My best beloved," he said, "'my own Rosaleen'! 'Until death us do part,' do you remember? The bond was made in heaven, Betty!"

She smiled through her tears.

“Until Death us do Part”

“I love you,” she murmured, “and shall forever and forever.”

“Will you leave all, Betty?” he asked longingly, “all, and follow me into exile and poverty?”

“Unto the ends of the earth, my lord and master,” she answered smiling, the old Betty suddenly peeping out at him from her dark eyes; “if I have you I have all!” she whispered.

Warm hearted, impulsive, careless Lady Betty was not one to give her heart unless she gave it royally.

After a moment she raised her face, rosy and tear-stained, but smiling.

“Did you know me at first?” she asked, “in the woods at Althorpe? Did you divine who I was?”

He laughed softly, taking her face between his hands and holding it fondly, framed thus, so she could not hide it from him.

“Did I know the sun when it shone?” he asked. “Ah, my little witch, I knew you! I had been watching you for two days and more, whenever I could catch a glimpse of you. Did you know me, madam?”

She smiled adorably and tried to hide her blushes in his hands.

“I felt it,” she whispered, “I think I knew

My Lady Clancarty

you by intuition — from that first moment — but afterwards — ”

“ But afterwards ? ” he asked relentlessly.

She laughed, her eyes shining. “ You tried to deceive me,” she said, “ in the garden — you remember ? — for a little while, I thought you could n’t be *you*, and — ” her voice trailed off, her face was as scarlet as any poppy.

“ And ? ” he persisted gleefully, holding her still.

“ I thought — I thought that I had given my heart to a stranger — and I was married — and — ” she broke off, she could not speak for his kisses.

“ Would you have divorced the beggar for me ? ” he whispered maliciously.

“ O Donough ! ” she cried, throwing her arms around his neck in the very ecstasy of her joy at her escape from such a dilemma, “ O Donough, it would have broken my heart if you had n’t been — *you* ! ”

Again a silence and then, —

“ Why did you put your foot on the shamrock ? ” he whispered.

She hid her face on his neck. “ I wanted it,” she confessed, in a smothered tone, “ I wanted it to keep ! Where is it ? ”

He drew it from his breast, a withered sprig

“Until Death us do Part”

folded in a piece of paper, and she seized upon it and kissed it.

“Nay,” he said, “that you shall not — not even my shamrock shall share your kisses with me! That is one stolen from me, madam, give me the shamrock.”

“Never!” she defied him, clasping it to her own bosom, “never — ’t is mine to wear for your sake.”

His eyes shone. “My Irish beauty,” he said, “*roisin bheag dubh!* — if I may not have the shamrock I must have the kiss back.”

“Why did you treat me so that last night?” he went on, “you perverse witch, you tormentor, you deserve to suffer for flouting your lord and master.”

“That was it,” she said, “you came in with the air of a conquering hero; I thought you would not woo me, that you claimed me too much like a master; that, perhaps, you did n’t love me, but only felt that you were my husband.”

He laughed quietly. “You coquette!” he said fondly, “you knew I loved you — you saw it in my eyes, for I know they devoured you — you felt it!”

Betty hung her head guiltily. “I could not help it,” she said, with a little sob, “I loved

My Lady Clancarty

you, — and suddenly I thought you knew it, and were careless of it !”

He kissed her hands softly. “You knew I loved you !” he exclaimed reproachfully.

She looked up through her tears. “I love to hear you say it,” she murmured rapturously.

After awhile she looked around the miserable room.

“My love,” she cried, “can’t I take you away from this awful place? It breaks my heart to have you here! With that female dragon, too.”

“Nay, grieve not, Betty,” he answered smiling, “it shines with you in it. How I shall picture you here — in your white and pink gown, with the little hood on your head — the house is a palace, dear! It is too good for a poor man now.”

“And you are poor !” she exclaimed, her tears breaking out afresh, “you are poor and I — I have everything !”

“Nay,” he replied, “I am rich in having you !”

But her tears fell. She could not leave him so, she cried, clinging to him ; the thought of that poor place would break her heart ! And it took all his persuasion and caresses to win a smile from her again.

“Until Death us do Part”

“And I must go,” she said at last, showing an April face, smiles and tears together, “I must go, or else they will miss me, and if Spencer found you here, I know not what he would do; he hates a Jacobite! But, oh, my darling, ’twill not be long ere I shall send some token to you, or have some message from you.”

“Not long,” he said, his eyes sparkling, “not long, dear Betty! As soon as I can walk — a plague upon this wound — as soon as I can move I will come to you! I can’t die now!”

“Oh, the risk of it!” she cried, but her face shone, and then suddenly, “Donough,” she said, “why had you to fight my Lord Savile? and after all I did to prevent it!”

“He insulted me, my love,” Clancarty replied, “and — and, well, dear heart, after that night I thought you might care for him and not for me, and it drove me mad.”

Betty smiled enchantingly.

“You were jealous,” she said, “jealous of me!”

“I was mad with it, Betty,” he declared passionately; “and here I lie, curse this wound, like a log, and other men are near you, bask in your smiles, kiss your hand! It drives me to destruction!”

My Lady Clancarty

And she looking down at him in his weakness, thin and fever flushed,—she fell upon her knees again beside him, holding her soft cheek against his, and saying only two words — softly, sweetly, with adorable tenderness —
“ My husband ! ”

Afterwards, in the loneliness of the woodland, Betty pressed a full purse into Denis’s unreluctant hand.

“ Not a word to your lord — on your life ! ” she charged him ; “ but get all he needs and come to me for more — and we must move him to some comfortable refuge at once. Mind you, everything he needs and instantly.”

Denis’s face widened into a seraphic smile as he pressed the purse fondly.

“ By the Virgin, my lady,” he said, “ I shall have to be afther telling him a legend — faix, he’ll think I’ve found an angel of a Jew, yer ladyship ! ”

CHAPTER XXIII

MY LORD SPENCER

IT happened that when Lady Clancarty came back from her visit to the house in the forest, weary and tear-stained but happier and more peaceful, she found herself in trouble. She had been gone a long time and unhappily her absence had been noticed and commented upon. Faithful and devoted as Alice was, she was not quickwitted enough to invent excuses, and was, indeed, thoroughly frightened and distressed by her mistress' absence which she could not help connecting in some way with Lord Clancarty. There had been, in consequence, a great hubbub at the Lion's Head, and men were running hither and yon; while the servants, who had carried her chair, to save themselves from blame had not failed to give a highly colored account of her meeting with a strange man in the lane and her disappearance in his company. When Lady Betty came quietly back through the garden, hoping to

My Lady Clancarty

escape to her room unobserved, she met Lord Spencer with his face as white as a sheet and his lids drooped low over his eyes. He stood in the door of the inn that opened upon the court, and his sister came upon him so unexpectedly that she had no time for flight. She knew the signs too well, however, not to be prepared, and her old spirit returned to her stronger than ever, and she held her head high. But Spencer did not intend to open the quarrel there in a public place, his mood was more dangerous. He was quite aware that the servants, and even the landlord, were peeping at them from the kitchen way, and he bowed courteously to his sister and offered her his hand.

“Permit me, madam, to escort you to our mother,” he said so suavely that the culprit shivered.

“I can go quite well alone, Charles,” she replied passing him with a careless manner that was scarcely a faithful indication of her mood; “I am too weary to drink tea or play glee,” she added yawning; “faith, ’t is tiresome to walk in the fields.”

“Extremely so,” replied my lord, as smooth as silk, “especially when you bring wood briars back upon your farthingale.”

My Lord Spencer

Lady Betty blushed red as a poppy as she glanced down at the telltale twig caught in the ruffles of her skirts.

"Pull it off, my dear," she said sweetly.

"Nay, I fear the thorns," he replied, with distant politeness.

She plucked it away herself with a little grimace.

"You are wise, Charles," she said, "'t is well to keep your fingers out of other people's troubles."

He bit his lip, giving her a furious glance as she tripped up the stairs ahead of him. But, though he followed more deliberately, he entered Lady Sunderland's room but a moment after her, and in time to hear her reply to his mother's sharp inquiry.

"I walked a little way in the meadows, madam," said Betty, with delightful mendacity; "you know you recommended it for my complexion."

"A fine diversion," remarked Lord Spencer, with a sneer, "but who, pray, was your companion?"

Lady Betty gave him a sidelong look that spoke volumes.

"Faith," she retorted, with a shrug, "the world would be a dull place with no men in it."

My Lady Clancarty

Lady Sunderland tittered behind her fan ; if anything appealed to her, it was her daughter's absolute audacity. But Spencer was furious.

"You choose a fine subject for a jest," he said ; "I would have you know, madam, that my sister cannot run about Newmarket with a groom !"

Then Betty turned upon him like a fury.

"Do not dare to say that to me again," she cried, her bosom heaving with passion ; "you forget to whom you speak ! Do you think — do you dare to think — that I am not as capable as you of defending my own honor and dignity ? More, sir, I would have you know that I am accountable to none but my father and — my husband !" and she swept past him and out of the room like a whirlwind.

The older countess sank back in her chair and giggled like a girl.

"La !" she exclaimed, "her spirit ! — I'd give ten guineas to see her do that over again, — and you deserved it, Charles, my love."

Her son gave her an exasperated look.

"That fellow is Clancarty — I am sure of it," he said fiercely, "and the minx is in communication with him — but, by Saint Thomas, I'll break it up — if I have to break his head !"

"Fudge, my love," replied the countess

My Lord Spencer

tittering, "'t will take more than your wit to keep two lovers apart; but never fear, she'll not give up her wealth and comfort to run away with him — she has too much sense."

Lord Spencer's eyelids drooped lower. "I'll see that she never has the opportunity, madam," he said, in a cool voice that had the effect of making Lady Sunderland shiver much as Betty had.

Meanwhile, Lady Clancarty poured out her hopes and fears and half-formed plans to Alice Lynn. The first thing to be done was to get the wounded man into a place of comfort, where he would also be secure, and in this Alice could help more than her mistress had dreamed. The girl had an uncle living in Cambridge, a mercer, and a man with Jacobite leanings, and she at once suggested his house as a possible shelter for Lord Clancarty. After some discussion, her mistress eagerly accepted this opportunity, especially as she must leave Newmarket soon for London to join her father, and Cambridge would be near. There were many secret missives passing to and fro between the house in the woods and the Lion's Head, but Betty found herself too closely watched by Spencer to dare another visit, and by the end of a week Lord Clancarty was

My Lady Clancarty

strong enough to be moved to Cambridge, to her infinite relief. The journey was safely and secretly accomplished, and she had the happiness of knowing that he would have both care and nursing, besides greater security.

By this time the races were over, and the stream of people had poured back to the capital, where Parliament had been opened by the king, and Newmarket was empty and quiet. Lady Sunderland went to Windsor, leaving her daughter to go on to London to the earl's house, where Sunderland and Spencer had preceded her.

Lady Clancarty went up to London, therefore, with her two women, Alice and Melissa Thurle, and tried to wait with patience for an opportunity to see her husband again. She was cheered and solaced, however, by frequent secret messages that assured her, not only of his safety, but that he was mending rapidly. He had even been able to write her one letter himself, which she kept hidden in her bosom by day and under her pillow by night, though it was only a meagre little letter, written while his hand was still unsteady.

"Dear heart," he wrote, "was it a dream — that lovely vision in the dark cabin? Were those soft kisses immaterial too? Or did I

My Lord Spencer

really hold you in my arms and feel your cheek against my own? Dear heart, dear wife, I love you, yet am I parted from you — but not for long — not for long! Else would this earth be a purgatory and I should wish the wound had been fatal! Forgive me, I do not doubt you, — I should rather die.”

But the time came, at last, when it was even dangerous to receive or send these missives, for Lord Spencer was watchful and suspicious still, and for Clancarty’s sake Betty forced herself to be patient, — the sharpest trial of all.

The weeks passed and the cold Saint Agnes weather was upon them. Parliament was in the depths of its wrangles over the military establishment, but the House of Commons, though never more unruly than in these last years of William the Third, was in a somewhat milder mood — alarmed by the threatened difficulty of the Spanish Succession — and it permitted the ministers to put the most favorable interpretation upon the law and retain ten thousand fighting men. Further, it expressed its attachment to the sovereign’s person by suspending the benefit of the Habeas Corpus Act twelve months longer from Bernardi and the other conspirators involved in the late Assassination Plot. Lord Sunderland was

My Lady Clancarty

almost constantly at the king's elbow, absorbed in political affairs, and Spencer stood out as a shining light among the younger Whigs.

Meanwhile, Lady Clancarty fretted her heart out because she could neither see Clancarty nor get a message from him. Her suite of rooms at Leicester House — which was now the town house of the Earl of Sunderland — were never so dreary. She paced them day and night in her anxiety, and struggle as she would to hide it, there were signs of it upon her face. Yet she played her part well as the mistress of her father's house, and she had never been more lovely or more courted. Her receptions were always crowded, and at every ball she was the centre of a lively group of admirers and friends. But with it all her heart ached.

It was one evening, the night of my Lord Bridgewater's ball at his house in the Barbican, that Lady Clancarty stood looking at her own reflection, all dressed for the rout. Her gown, a wondrous affair of silver lace and white brocade, became her well, and her luxuriant hair was deftly dressed with one large diamond flashing like a star amidst the curls. She turned away from the glass smiling — she could not help a certain pleasure in the picture — but the next she sighed and looked about for Alice.

My Lord Spencer

"Where is the girl?" she said to herself; "alas! what a silly fool I am to deck myself out like this — for what? I know not, since he cannot see me and I cannot tell how it fares with him."

Her mood changed swiftly; a moment before she had thought of herself and of the ball — now she stood dejected, her head bowed, tears in her eyes.

"Ah, if I only knew how he was," she murmured softly, "if I could only see him well!"

As she spoke the door opened gently and Alice looked in, glancing around the room.

"What ails you, Alice?" asked her mistress, "you wear the face of a conspirator; where have you been?"

Alice laid her finger on her lips and withdrew — to Betty's infinite astonishment — and the next instant the door opened wider and a tall man, cloaked and booted for riding, crossed the threshold.

Betty uttered a strange little cry; her beautiful India fan fell on the floor and broke in a thousand pieces. Lord Clancarty sprang toward her and caught her in his arms in time to keep her from falling.

"My darling!" he said, "I came too unexpectedly — I have done wrong."

My Lady Clancarty

“O Donough!” she cried, smiling through her tears, “I am so glad — so glad!” and she held him off to look at him; “pale,” she said, “and thin — but mine — mine own!”

“Ah, Betty darling!” he whispered, covering her face with kisses, “I have been dying for this — to come to you again!”

“And you came here!” she said, a little catch in her voice, “here, in this house, — oh, the danger of it! Spencer hates your very name, darling; how dared you come?”

He caressed her soft hair, smiling.

“How dared I, Betty?” he replied, “ah, my child, you do not know me. Are you glad to see me even here?”

“Am I glad?” she murmured, tears in her eyes. “Ah, Donough, the days have seemed like weeks — the weeks eternities!”

“I am not worthy of you,” he said, laying his cheek against her soft one, “I am not worthy of you; but above all else I love you — ay, better than my own soul!”

CHAPTER XXIV

MELISSA

MEANWHILE, Alice Lynn, with a pale face and watchful eyes, ran down the gallery that opened into Lady Clancarty's private apartments; she locked the door at the upper end and thrust the key into her pocket; she ran back to the only other entrance, the door upon the staircase, and there she seated herself upon the upper step, a devoted sentinel, though her heart beat almost to suffocation. If Clancarty were discovered here — here in his wife's rooms! Alice shook from head to foot; some awful intuition warned her that peril was at hand.

The gallery was long and dim; two tall tapers in the sconces upon the landing cast a soft radiance in a little space, but left deep shadows. The great house was strangely still. Alice sat and listened to the beating of her own heart which seemed louder than the faint sound of voices behind the closed door at her

My Lady Clancarty

back. So great was her love for Lady Betty that, like Catharine Douglas, she would have thrust her arm into the staples and held the door against a host, but for all that she was frightened. Presently she started and looked down the stairs. She had heard a soft tread below — yes, she was not mistaken ; a woman was coming up, the one woman whom she had thought safely out of the house that night, the one she trusted least, Melissa Thurle. At the moment Alice hated her, and set her teeth and waited, but she trembled, too. As for Melissa, she came up softly, a quiet smile on her smooth face, serenity in her shifting eyes ; soft, stealthy, feline in every movement. She pretended to be startled when she stumbled upon Alice, who barred the stairs. Melissa pressed her hand to her heart.

“ Why, how you frightened me ! ” she cried ; “ what is it, Alice ? ”

“ Nothing,” retorted Alice, who was little skilled in subterfuge and only stubbornly determined ; “ I thought you were gone to your aunt’s.”

“ I started,” replied Melissa sweetly, “ but ’t was too cold. I came back, and I have a message for Lady Betty from Lord Sunderland.”

Melissa

"She has a headache," said Alice; "you can leave the message with me; no one is to disturb her ladyship to-night unless she calls me."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Melissa, undisturbed, however; "this is unusual — but, unhappily, I must see my lady; Lord Sunderland's orders are explicit. I dare not disobey."

"I do!" declared Alice stubbornly, though she quaked, for she heard voices again and she knew, by Melissa's face, that she heard them, too, for a gleam passed over it, swift as the drawing of a knife.

"You are of no consequence," said the woman firmly; "I will see her," and she made a sudden spring to set the girl aside.

But Alice was strong, if she was not diplomatic, and she caught her firmly by the waist.

"You shall not see her!" she cried, her face blazing with honest anger, "you shall not worry her. I am stronger than you, and you will never get past me — never!" and she swung Melissa bodily back to the lower step.

At the moment, while the two eyed each other furiously, both heard a man's voice behind the closed door of Lady Clancarty's room. Alice turned white, and Melissa laughed.

My Lady Clancarty

She said not a word more. She laughed and shrugged her shoulders, and Alice's face burned with shame and anger. "The hateful wretch, the insulting, crawling creature," the girl thought; yet she was relieved to see her turn and walk quietly away. At the landing, however, she stopped and laughed.

"I beg your pardon," she said sweetly, "I'll not interrupt you again, Miss Prude."

And she went on, while Alice burned to run after her and box her ears. But she kept her post, not daring to leave the door unguarded, and after awhile, she called to Lady Betty and warned her, but in vain; the lovers could not part so soon. Clancarty lingered — lingered while the precious minutes flew and fate travelled nearer and yet nearer.

Once out of Alice's sight, Melissa crept, with her soft, catlike tread, along the lower gallery, felt her way down a narrow stair, the same by which Clancarty had ascended, and looking over her shoulder occasionally to see if the girl followed her, she opened another door noiselessly, crept on down a long room and through a hall. About her was every sign of luxury and magnificence, rich soft rugs upon the floors, long mirrors, beautiful statuary, rare bric-a-brac from the India houses, every

Melissa

evidence of culture and extravagance, and she crept like a panther ready to spring. Her face was like a white patch in the dusk of the candle-light, her green eyes shone, too, like a cat's. On, on she crept, stealthy, determined, venomous; a dangerous creature bent on a miserable errand. Again, looking back for Alice, another flight of stairs, and then a pause before a pair of closed folding-doors. She drew her breath and pressed her hand to her heart. It took courage, but she had it, of an evil sort, the courage that crawls in secret places and strikes a man behind the back. She opened the door gently and stood in a sudden flood of light, looking at Lord Spencer.

He sat by a great candelabrum, reading some pages of manuscript, and he did not hear her. But having come so far, she would not be balked; she glided nearer and began to purr at him. The sound was scarcely human, but he looked up quickly and bent his eyes sternly upon her. He was so cold a man, so pompous and important, that even this creeping creature recoiled a little. But it was too late now; his very glance was a command.

"I beg pardon, my lord," she murmured, soft as oil, "but my love for the family — my duty drove me here!"

My Lady Clancarty

“What for?” he demanded coolly, viewing her from head to foot.

She was a little frightened.

“My lord,” after all she blurted it out under those eyes of his, “there’s a man in your sister’s rooms!”

He sprang from his chair with clenched hands.

“You damned lying cat, you!” he exclaimed, between his teeth.

Melissa fell on her knees.

“Oh, my lord,” she whined, “I did not mean that! ’Tis her husband—’tis Lord Clancarty himself!”

It was as though a white mask had fallen on his face, his figure was rigid, his eyes glittered; rage was almost choking him.

“How do you know, woman?” he asked fiercely.

“I know him, sir, he has been haunting her,” hurried on Melissa, “at Althorpe, at Newmarket, and now here. ’Twas he who fought the duel in the meadow. They have tried to hide it from me but they could not. He is in her room now.”

Spencer glared at her, his hands twitching; when he spoke it was hoarsely.

“How came he there? How came he in this house?” he demanded.

Melissa

"Alice Lynn admitted him," said Melissa, glibly enough now, her eyes narrow and pale; "and she is trying to guard the doors. You may see her for yourself, my lord," and she fastened her eager gaze upon him.

She thought to see him take his sword and go in search of his enemy; she had whetted her appetite for revenge for her mistress' scorn of her with the thought of a duel in Lady Clancarty's rooms, and of Clancarty in blood at his wife's feet, or driven out into the night — whipped! Ah, how she licked her lips at the thought; that would be the very acme of triumph, and the young countess had treated her with such contempt.

But Lord Spencer disappointed her.

"Send hither Giles," he said sharply, and as she went out, reluctant to close the scene, she saw him pick up his hat and cloak.

Wild with eagerness and curiosity, she hung about the door; she heard some orders to Giles, the confidential servant, and she saw Spencer go out alone, and gasped in surprise and disappointment. Was he afraid?

And Giles looked askance at her as he passed.

"Where did he go?" she whispered eagerly.

"To the devil," said the man sullenly, "you're a pretty bird, you are," and he meas-

My Lady Clancarty

ured her with rough scorn, even while he sat down by the main door with his pistol on his knee.

Melissa wetted her lips, creeping along by the wall opposite, watchful and feline.

"Are you to catch him here?" she demanded, meaning Lord Clancarty.

The man stared at her again.

"Yes," he replied, "I'm told to shoot him, but steer clear, my girl, people don't always hit the mark," and he grinned.

"I shall tell Lord Spencer!" she hissed at him.

"Do! 't is your business," retorted the man, "and 't will hang you sometime, my lady-bird!"

CHAPTER XXV

MR. SECRETARY VERNON

AT the door of Leicester House Lady Clancarty's coach stood waiting to take her to the ball at my Lord Bridgewater's, and she had quite forgotten both the ball — which was a grand affair — and the coach. So it was that Lord Spencer found it waiting his convenience for a very different purpose. He entered it at once and directed the coachman to go to Westminster to the house of the Under Secretary of State, and away the great, rumbling, emblazoned coach rolled on its deadly errand, not freighted with the charming and vivacious countess but with a young nobleman, whose heart swelled with passion and another emotion, which his lordship mistook for virtue — the virtue of the Roman who slew his daughter.

As he rode through the dark streets of London that night, a link-boy running at the horses' heads, a tumult of strange feelings struggled in his bosom. Passion ran high then, and party

My Lady Clancarty

hatreds led men to the dagger and the sword. The very fact that his father's political roguery was a byword made the young man more zealous for his own reputation. He burned to be a Whig of the Whigs, a shining example as a party leader, a distinguished patriot, and now he found sedition in his own household, a viper in his bosom. His hatred of his Jacobite brother-in-law ran so entirely in accord with his political creed and his ideas of patriotism, that he mistook it for a virtuous indignation. He moved, therefore, with an air of righteous displeasure, of calm dignity, when he descended from the coach at the secretary's door.

He was received with obsequious respect by the servants and ushered up the stairs to the private office. Mr. Secretary Vernon had entertained friends at supper and was playing shovel-board with his guests at the time. He came in, therefore, in a genial mood, to urge Lord Spencer to join them. He had every reason to propitiate the young Whig, to soothe and flatter a man who had already gained some weight in Parliament. But Lord Spencer cut short his civilities.

"I come on pressing business, Mr. Secretary," he said gravely, with a dejected air; "a young girl's folly can, perhaps, be excused,

Mr. Secretary Vernon

yet 't is hard to tell you that my sister — from compassion — has received a traitor into my father's house ;” he paused, looking solemnly at the secretary.

Vernon pricked up his ears. The assassination plot of Barclay and Bernardi and the little band of conspirators which had thought to cut off King William, was not yet old enough to have lost its terrors, and the Blue Posts Tavern was known to swarm with Jacobites, made bold — as most Whigs believed — by William's lenity.

“Your lordship distresses me,” he said politely, as Spencer seemed to wait for him ; “may I hear more ? ”

“You know the story,” his lordship said regretfully, “the foolish marriage between my sister and the Earl of Clancarty ? ”

Vernon nodded, a sudden change coming over his face.

“Clancarty is in London,” said Spencer, “and my sister has received him. You can picture my despair at such folly ! Mr. Secretary, I must have a warrant, at once, and a guard to send the villain to the Tower.”

Secretary Vernon shot a look at him that a wiser man would have called disdainful, but Spencer was too self-absorbed to see it.

My Lady Clancarty

"I remember that Clancarty is excepted from the king's amnesty," said the secretary thoughtfully, "he falls under the penalties of the last Treason Act—but your sister—can't we manage this more adroitly, my lord?"

Lord Spencer looked at him with sternly virtuous anger. "Sir," he replied, "I put my duty before all else—I desire his immediate arrest. Delay may mean his ultimate escape."

Vernon bowed. "My lord," he said, and his lip curled scornfully, "you have truly Roman virtue. I will fill out the warrant at once and place it at your disposal. You desire a guard from the Tower?" he added, as he went to his table and began to write.

"I do, and speedily," replied the young nobleman, with a sort of savage eagerness.

"Your lordship shall be accommodated," Vernon said, and touched the bell which summoned his clerk, and to him the secretary gave a few sharp orders. Then he turned to Lord Spencer.

"This young man will accompany you, my lord," he said blandly, "and will give this warrant into the hands of the proper officer, who will go with you also, taking a sufficient guard to effect the capture."

Mr. Secretary Vernon

Spencer thanked him. "Your zeal is commendable, Mr. Secretary," he said proudly, "'t is an hour of peril to the state, and believe me, sir, when I serve my country thus, I sacrifice my dearest feelings at its altar."

Vernon bowed profoundly.

"My lord," he responded, "you deserve the plaudits of a grateful people. The misfortunes of civil war and civil dissensions have divided many a house against itself in this kingdom."

But after Spencer left, the secretary walked back into the room where a party of young men were playing shovel-board, and he told the story with a shrug.

"I thought of offering him thirty pieces of silver," he remarked, "for his sister's husband."

"Zounds!" exclaimed one young gallant, "my Lady Clancarty will be a widow — 't is an ill wind that blows nobody good."

But another guest cursed Lord Spencer as a cowardly villain. It was Sir Edward Mackie.

"There's a story that it was Clancarty who fought the duel with Lord Savile at Newmarket," said another; "what say you to that, Mackie?"

My Lady Clancarty

But he was gone.

“Jove!” exclaimed one of the secretary’s guests, “I’ll wager ten pounds he’s gone to warn them!”

And Vernon only smiled.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ARREST

IN spite of Alice's warning, in spite of the deadly peril that surrounded him, Clancarty lingered at his wife's side. It was hard to say farewell, hard to leave her, and though her heart was filled with misgivings and anxieties, Lady Betty could not urge him to go ; indeed, she clung to him, weeping at the thought of a parting that involved such perils and hardships for him and such sorrow for her. Moreover, there was much to talk of and to plan. They did not mean to be separated long ; she was to go with him to the Continent or to Ireland, and there were a thousand details to arrange, a thousand hopes and fears to strengthen or allay — and they were lovers, and when did lovers ever learn to watch the tedious hand of time ?

The ball at Lord Bridgewater's was forgotten, Spencer was forgotten, all the world, in fact, while Betty — lovely with happiness, glow-

My Lady Glancarty

ing and smiling in her splendid gown — thought of no one but her husband, and desired no admiration but his.

“Ah, my darling,” he whispered, looking down at her as her face lay against his breast, “can you give up all this?” he touched her lace and jewels, “and this?” he pointed at the luxurious room, “and all you have and are — to follow a poor exile into poverty and obscurity?”

She smiled divinely.

“To follow my beloved even to the ends of the earth,” she said, “‘for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, until death do us part,’” she murmured tenderly.

“Amen!” he said, and laid his face against her soft hair, moved — how deeply she could not know; her utter trust, her fondness touched him to the heart. This splendid woman, with every gift of nature and of fortune, willing to renounce all for him — he held her close and his eyes dimmed.

“Ah,” he said, “’t is worth living, dear heart, for your sake! When I thought you scorned my poverty and would rather be the wife of Savile than mine, I cared not if I died — but now! Ah, Betty, you could make a dungeon paradise.”

The Arrest

"Nay," she replied, "it shall not be a dungeon, but a home, my husband, somewhere — even where these quarrelling kings cannot disturb our paradise. Faith, my politics grow strangely mixed," she added, with a smile.

"Love knows no politics," he answered, smiling too, "you and I shall not quarrel over our principles, sweetheart."

As he spoke, the door was thrown open and Alice ran into the room with a ghastly face.

"Oh, my lady," she cried, "there's something wrong — I hear strange voices below, there are men upon the stairs! My lord must hide."

Betty sprang to her feet.

"Quick!" she cried, "Donough, there is the other door!"

"'Tis useless," cried Alice; "they come from both sides — I saw them!"

"Then I will hide you!" Betty cried wildly, catching her husband's arm.

For an instant he hesitated; he, too, heard the heavy feet in the gallery, then he shook his head.

"No, Betty, dear," he said, "I cannot be hunted like a rat in a hole; I must face them like a man, like your husband."

She uttered a little cry of despair and clung to him, while Alice wrung her hands.

My Lady Clancarty

"Oh, the window, my lord!" she cried, "there is a balcony!"

"Too late, my girl," Lord Clancarty replied calmly, the light flashing in his gray eyes, his head erect; "no, no, I've never let an enemy see my back — I can't learn to run now."

Betty looked up at him and caught her breath; here was a man after her own heart. She felt his hand go to his sword and she, too, looked toward the door. They had not even thought of barring it, but it would have been useless, for it was thrown wide open by a sheriff's deputy, who was followed by a guard of stout yeomen from the Tower.

"Is Donough Macarthy, Earl of Clancarty, here?" demanded the sheriff, fixing his eyes on the earl as he stood there, with his wife clinging to him.

"I am Clancarty," he replied proudly. Resistance would have been worse than useless, and he only pressed his dear Betty closer to his heart; he knew that separation was inevitable.

"I have a warrant to seize the body of the Earl of Clancarty and carry him to the Tower, on the charge of high treason," said the officer, producing the parchment and reading the warrant aloud in the king's name.

The Arrest

"I do not acknowledge the authority of the Prince of Orange," said Clancarty calmly, "but I must submit to superior numbers," he added, with a scornful glance at the six stout yeomen who had filed into the room and stood gaping at Lady Clancarty. "You have arrested me in the apartments of my wife. I came to London solely to see the Countess of Clancarty, but I will go with you without further protest."

The officer bowed to Lady Clancarty.

"I am reluctant to part you, my lord," he said grimly, "but we have no time to lose; my orders are explicit."

"You might find a better office, sir," said Lady Betty, withering him with a look, and then breaking down when her husband kissed her farewell.

"Have comfort, dear heart," he whispered, though he knew the case was desperate; "bear up for my sake — now!"

But she clung to him in a passion of grief, begging to go with him to the Tower until it wrung his heart anew to leave her. Even the soldiers glanced away in grim silence, and she was half unconscious when Clancarty unclasped her hands from his neck and laid her in Alice's arms.

My Lady Clancarty

“Care for her, Alice,” he said, in a tone of deep but restrained emotion, “guard her tenderly, do not leave her in this hour of trial — for they will tear me from her! My poor darling — my poor wife!”

He lingered to kiss her again, to push the soft hair back from her forehead, and it was only a final order from the sheriff that took him from her side.

The guards had escorted him out at last, or rather he had walked out proudly with them, though his heart was aching for her. They were already at the lower door when Lady Clancarty, recovering consciousness, sprang up to come face to face with Spencer. Then the truth flashed upon her and she stood before him with a terrible face.

“You — you betrayed him!” she cried, “you sent those men here to drag him away!”

Lord Spencer took it as a compliment.

“I did,” he said piously; “I delivered the traitor to his fate; I would do it were he my own flesh and blood. No sacrifice is too great for truth and justice.”

“You hypocrite!” cried Lady Betty passionately; “you have broken your sister’s heart for the sake of your pride — your

The Arrest

politics ! You have murdered my husband — my husband !” she wrung her hands in agony.

“ I have done my duty,” he replied coldly.

“ Your duty ?” she cried bitterly ; “ was it then your duty to betray your sister’s husband ? To force an officer and his guard into your sister’s rooms — to trample on her tenderest feelings — to mortify and crush her ? Duty !” she repeated scornfully, “ then may no man henceforth do his duty ! Such virtue is more vile than vice — such courage worse than cowardice ! How dare you face me or look at me ? An injured woman ! I mark your white face, sir, and I marvel at its pallor ; it should burn with shame.”

Spencer ground his teeth in anger. “ You saucy minx,” he said, “ how dared you have that man here ? ”

“ How dared I ? ” she repeated, “ how dared I have my husband with me ? Whom should I have with me if not my husband ? ”

She paused for breath ; her bosom rose and fell, she put her hands to her throat as if she choked. It was a moment before she could speak.

“ What have you done ? ” she went on passionately, her slender figure towering, her eyes

My Lady Clancarty

on fire; "you have torn him from my arms, you have sent him to his death, but you cannot tear him from my heart! While that beats, while the blood runs through these veins, I will love him — love him! And he is my husband — my husband, do you hear, you coward? I bear his name, I am his, his flesh and blood, his very own — you cannot separate us! Even if you kill him, our souls are one; you cannot part them any more than you can rend the sky asunder! I am not your sister — I am Clancarty's wife."

"Shame on you, madam," said Spencer bitterly, his face like ashes, gray and white; "shame on you to declare yourself so passionately enamoured of a Jacobite — a reprobate — a —"

"Of my husband," she said, and her low voice cut like a lash.

"Your husband," he mocked; "are you sure that he is your lawful husband? A sneaking rogue who crept to your room by a back-stair — who would not face your family like a man of honor!"

"What insult more have you for me?" she cried; "'t is you who dared not face him; you crept behind him like a coward, you — you Judas!"

The Arrest

She caught her breath, her hands at her throat again.

"Sit down, madam," said his lordship coldly ; "your fury suffocates you. It will not avail," he laughed, "to set the rogue free !"

She looked at him strangely.

"Are you human?" she asked, "are you like other men? — or some monster, some abortive creature, cast upon the earth to wreck the lives of others? How could any woman marry you? I think you are not human — though we are of the same mother !"

Spencer laughed bitterly.

"Quite human, Elizabeth," he said sneering, "as human as my termagant sister — as the rogue they are carrying now to the Tower, where, I trust, he'll rest well — and safe."

She recoiled half way across the room and stared at him wildly, as if her very senses were bewildered.

"To the Tower?" she repeated, like a child who had a lesson by rote, "the great gloomy Tower yonder?"

"Would you have preferred Newgate?" my lord asked maliciously, beginning to find some joy in a situation that had not been without humiliation.

"They carry my husband to the Tower!"

My Lady Clancarty

Lady Betty cried wildly, clasping her hands to her bosom as if to still the tumult there, "and I stand here talking to the Judas who betrayed him! Go hang yourself, my lord,—surely you cannot want to live," she went on, mad with her despair; "let me see your face no more. The very air you breathe poisons me. Never, never shall the same roof shelter us again! I go, sir, your sister no longer, but the beggar's wife. I go to share his fate, to starve with him, to die for him or with him! But to see you no more forever and forever!"

She rushed past him, sweeping her skirts aside that they might not so much as touch him, and ran wildly out of the room.

Fleeing through the long galleries and down the stairs, in her splendid dress, and heedless of the gaping servants and of the bitter cold she went out, bareheaded, into the night.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE TRAITOR'S GATE

POOOR Lady Betty, half distracted, fled from the house into Leicester Fields, trying to find the party that had preceded her with her husband as a prisoner. The darkness and the peril of the London streets at that late hour did not enter her thoughts. Bareheaded and without a cloak to shield her from the cold night air, she ran around the square.

She saw lights in the adjacent houses, she heard voices in the distance, but she only looked for one—her husband. She took no thought of the madness of her project; she sped on and on, and might have come into some great peril had she not fallen almost into the arms of a man who was running toward Lord Sunderland's mansion. They came upon each other in the darkness; in her grief and nervousness she uttered a little cry, and he knew her voice.

My Lady Clancarty

"Lady Clancarty!" he exclaimed, stopping short.

It was young Mackie.

At first she did not recognize him, but when she did, she caught his arm with a frantic appeal. The light from a dim lantern overhead shone on her white face.

"My husband!" she cried, "my Lord Clancarty. They have dragged him away to prison. My—nay, I will not call him my brother—that man yonder, Charles Spencer, betrayed him—betrayed my husband, and they came into my very rooms to arrest him—to tear us apart, and he has gone," she added wildly, "gone to the Tower."

"I know," he replied, deeply moved, "I know. I was at Vernon's house and heard it after your—after Lord Spencer got the warrant. I came to warn you but, alas, I am too late."

"Yes, too late!" cried Betty, a little wildly, "too late; but I am going to the Tower—I am going to my husband!"

They had walked on a little way as they talked, and were so near Aylesbury House that the lights from within fell on her. He saw her uncovered head and dazzling gown.

"Lady Clancarty," he said persuasively, "let

The Traitor's Gate

us go back for your cloak and mask. You can't go down the river to the Tower thus—in the cold!”

“I care not for it,” she replied; “go back?” she shuddered, “I could not—I cannot breathe the same air with Spencer, it poisons me!”

Without another word young Mackie took off his own cloak and wrapped it around her, and she, in her excitement, took no thought of his exposure to the cold in his thin suit of velvet and satin.

“I must go!” she reiterated, “the very shortest way—I must go to my husband!” and her voice broke pitifully.

“You shall go, dear Lady Clancarty,” he said gently, setting himself to face the task, though a sharp pain rankled in his own bosom, and when he drew her hand through his arm he set his teeth.

He loved her, too, and she took no more thought of him than of a stone—such is the way of women.

The night wind cut their faces as they walked toward the river. She was so used to service from men, to their devotion, that she took his for granted; she did not even try to talk to him, but he heard her weeping softly and the pitiful little sound made him shiver. He

My Lady Clancarty

longed to comfort her, but he set his teeth harder — he knew she wept for Lord Clancarty.

When they reached the water stairs she was resolute again and alert. She walked unassisted down the steps and urged him to take any boat for the Tower, impatient of the wrangling of the boatmen. She stamped her foot at them, in fact, and took so high a tone that, at last, the blackguards subsided and took them meekly enough, though the order, "the Traitor's Gate," caused some murmurs.

Once on the water she sat erect and silent, straining eyes and ears for the king's boat, which had, of course, preceded hers, with her husband aboard. She hoped to be close enough behind to gain admission with him; she had no other hope, no other prayer but to share his fate, however wretched, to follow him to prison and to death. Her impulsive nature stirred at last to its depths swept her on. She could be as heroic now and as resolute as she had been careless and happy in the summer time of her life. She was imperial woman to her finger tips; she loved and hated with the full, fierce tide of her rich nature. She gave all and kept nothing back.

Young Mackie looking at the dark outline of her figure against the gray river, felt all this

The Traitor's-Gate

keenly and admired her the more. She was a woman to die for, he thought, and turned his boyish face away, for he dared not look at her—it tried him too far.

Something in her mood seemed to cast a spell upon the boatmen; the wherry swept on in silence, save for the sound of the oars and the ripple of water under its bow. The lights of the city, feeble lanterns swung across the narrow, reeking streets, gleamed dimly; the river was as still as death.

At last the frowning bastions of the Tower—that inexorable fortress, dark with secrets, grim as Fate,—cast their black shadow over them. And then,—Betty's heart stood still—the boat turned and began to creep under the vaulted arch at the Traitor's Gate. The faint gleaming of night upon the waters narrowed behind them and was swallowed up in darkness, while before, the red lights at the gate began to shine. The boat jarred on the steps. She looked up and saw the closed wicket and the guard of yeomen looking down, and suddenly despair seized upon her and she trembled so that Mackie had almost to lift her from the boat.

Then arose the question of admittance. She wished to see the warden; but Sir Edward

My Lady Clancarty

knew this was no easy matter and resorted to a stratagem.

"We come from Mr. Secretary Vernon," he said boldly, with an air of authority.

The sergeant at the gate hesitated, and asked for a permit.

"The matter is pressing," Mackie said firmly; "we must be admitted."

The sergeant shook his head, looking gravely out upon them. A yeoman lifted his torch and the light streamed on Lady Betty's beautiful face.

"I cannot admit you at this hour," the old soldier replied firmly but not unkindly; "my orders are explicit."

Betty's face changed and seemed to shrink into childish proportions; she held out her hands pitifully.

"I beg you," she said, her voice quivering, "I am Lady Clancarty, the wife of the earl who has just been arrested. Is he here? I pray you tell me?"

The two men at the wicket exchanged significant glances, and the elder looked down at her again in open pity.

"He was committed about twenty minutes ago, madam," he replied kindly.

"Twenty minutes? O Sir Edward, twenty

The Traitor's Gate

minutes ago, and I might have seen him !” and she wept bitterly.

She drew a ring from her finger, a costly jewel, and pressed it upon the soldier.

“I pray you let me enter too !” she cried, “I would only share his prison. See, I have no weapons — nothing ! I cannot set him free — I only want to share his fate !”

The sergeant waved aside her jewel.

“Nay,” he said firmly, “bribes I may not take. Truly, madam, if I could let you see your husband I would do it, but I dare not.”

Mackie urged him then, using the name of the Duke of Devonshire, though he had felt from the first that without a permit she could never be admitted. Lady Clancarty would not give way so readily ; she struggled with her grief and commanded her voice again, going closer to the wicket and laying her hands upon it — that famous wicket which had closed behind so many prisoners ; on Anne Boleyn and Lady Jane Grey, on Sir Thomas More and Cranmer and on the Duke of Norfolk ; the wicket stained with a long history of terror and despair — was clasped now by Lady Betty’s slender fingers, and she prayed for admittance — a new prayer, indeed, at the Traitor’s Gate.

“You will let me in,” she said ; “I must

My Lady Clancarty

“speak with the captain of the guard! I am the daughter of the Earl of Sunderland. I demand this much — to see the captain of the guard.”

At this the man gave way a little; he sent a yeoman for the captain of the watch, but he kept the wicket closed and stood grim and silent, looking out upon them. The torch-light flared up and down, the water rippled below them on the stone steps — it seemed like the tongue of a hungry wolf lapping blood — and there was silence.

At last came the echo of heavy feet upon the stone floor, the rattle of arms, and the tall, gray-headed captain came to the wicket and looked out, inexorable as fate, though his eyes changed a little at the sight of Lady Clancarty, common as a woman's grief was there. He listened to Mackie's explanation, gravely respectful but unrelenting.

“I ask only to see him — to share his fate,” Betty said, as Sir Edward concluded, “’t is so little!”

But the officer shook his head.

“Nay, madam,” he replied kindly, “not without the king's orders.”

“At least permit her to see her husband, to speak with him,” urged Sir Edward.

“’T is a small thing to grant me,” cried

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Betty, "I pray you, sir, think of your own wife in a like case, and show compassion on the unfortunate!"

"Nay, madam, I need no urging," said the captain, "if it were in my power—but it is not; since the last assassination plot we have been strictly enjoined to guard our prisoners of state and hedge them in with every precaution. Your case is in higher hands than mine. Surely, Lady Clancarty, you can obtain influence enough to grant your wish, — your father, Secretary Vernon."

"My father," Lady Clancarty repeated bitterly, as she stood thinking, her white face downcast.

The two men exchanged significant glances; neither of them had hope. Clancarty was scarcely an object for the king's clemency; he was a notorious Jacobite, a man of daring, whose personal prominence as an Irish earl, no less than his political affiliations, marked him out for probable example.

Happily, she did not see their looks, she stood leaning against the wicket, her head bent. She looked up and began to plead again to see her husband.

"You may put me behind bolts and bars," she said passionately, "I care not; indeed, I

My Lady Clancarty

pray to be a prisoner too, since he is one. Ah, it is so little that I ask. What could I do? I could not break his chains — I could not set him free! I only pray — pray you,” she stretched out her hands in fervent supplication, “to let me share his prison! I cannot be free while he is here — I will not be free!”

The old soldier shook his head, he was deeply touched.

“I cannot, madam,” he replied; “but let me beg you to carry this petition to one who can and will surely hear you.”

“You mean the king?” said Mackie.

The officer inclined his head. “I know of no one in these three kingdoms so merciful,” he replied quietly.

“’Tis a wise thought,” said Sir Edward gently, as if he spoke to a child; “come, Lady Clancarty, let us carry our petition to his majesty.”

For the moment she had completely broken down. She wept and her sobs shook her from head to foot.

“I cannot leave him here,” she cried; “how dare you ask me?”

Young Mackie bowed his head; he, too, was shaken by her emotion.

“I only beg of you to appeal to one who

The Traitor's Gate

has the power to grant your petition," he said, very low.

It was a little while yet before she conquered herself and looked up through her tears at them both.

"I believe you mean kindly to me," she said, with a humility strangely touching in one of her high spirit; "I will go to my father, Sir Edward, he may hear me—but I have little hope—so little hope!" and she fell to weeping again.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ALICE AND DENIS

WHEN Lady Clancarty fled wildly from her father's house, poor Alice was too much overwhelmed with the agony of the recent scene to know what to do. For the moment she gave way only to her grief, fleeing from Spencer and from the woman, Melissa, as she would have fled from pestilence. But she was too sensible and too faithful to remain long without making an effort to follow her mistress. In less than an hour, therefore, she had gathered up a heavy cloak and hood of Lady Betty's, and assuming her own mantle, went out into the night. It took no small courage to do this, when the streets of London were beset by rogues of every class and description, and the dim streaks of light from an occasional lantern swung in some archway served only to make the darkness visible. Alice, who was urged on by no frenzy like Lady Clancarty's, went out with a sinking heart, her sharp sense of duty alone keeping her to her purpose. She had not dared to ask even a

Alice and Denis

lackey from the house to attend her; these town servants were strangers to her, and everywhere she looked for treachery. Poor Alice wrapped her cloak around her and set out alone upon a devious course of wanderings, through every lane and byway in the vicinity, in a fruitless quest for her dear lady. Sometimes the girl proceeded quietly through a deserted street; again she shrank into the shelter of a friendly doorway at the sound of high voices and drunken laughter; and again—and more than once—she dodged some ruffian who would have pounced upon her, and fled, saved by swift running, for she was fleet as any deer. The terrors of the night grew upon her until her knees shook under her. She could not imagine what evil had befallen her lovely and unhappy mistress and more than once she stopped, blinded by tears.

Just as her despair reached a climax, she came in sight of the Standard Tavern and glanced at it timidly; even at that hour it was well lighted and full of company. As she watched, a figure came out of the door and stood by the lantern under the sign—a short, sturdy figure and a homely Irish face. She recognized Denis, and Denis was Lord Clancarty's faithful servant. She did not know

My Lady Clancarty

that he had only just discovered the arrest of his master in Sunderland's house and had put his own interpretation upon it. She rushed blindly — as we do — upon fate.

“O Mr. Denis!” she cried, revealing her white face under her hood, “have you seen my mistress? my dear Lady Clancarty?”

Denis wheeled and eyed her with an expression that she did not understand.

“Begorra!” he ejaculated, beneath his breath, and swept down upon her like an avalanche.

“I know ye, me darlint,” he said, and there was something in his tone that sent a shiver through Alice, “ye'll walk a stip with me an' tell me thrue all ye know of this, ivery wurd! Come on, mavourneen, 't is fer me ear alone.”

“I can't go with you,” Alice said, trying to pull away from him, but his grip was a vise; “my poor lady is out here in the night — I must find her.”

“A curse upon her!” said Denis fiercely, “a curse upon her smilin', desateful face; may she dhry up an' wither away loike a did leaf — an' may —”

Alice cried out a little.

“Let me go!” she said, “you bloody Irishman, let me go. I thought you were a faithful servant to Lord Clancarty.”

Alice and Denis

“ I ’ll not let ye go,” retorted Denis savagely, dragging her along, “ I ’ll not let ye go until I make yer teeth rattle ! ”

Alice screamed aloud in an agony of fright ; but of what avail was it ? A woman’s scream in the black mouth of a London lane at midnight ; it was only a drop upon the surface of a black pool.

“ Scrame away, ye little threacherous, spiteful cat, ye ! ” said Denis, shaking her fiercely ; “ ye ’d bethray me masther, would ye ? Begorra, I ’d loike ter kill ye intirely ! Take that, ye hizzy ! ” and he gave her a sound blow that made the poor girl reel.

Alice was no weakling and she put out all her strength and fought him, screaming.

“ Oh, ye cat, ye ! ” he said harshly, shaking her again ; “ take that — an’ that, ye lyin’, desateful hizzy ! I ’ll teach ye,” and he shook her much as a big dog shakes a kitten.

Alice screamed ; if she even dimly conceived his error, she had no breath to argue with him ; she believed, indeed, that her last hour had come, and shrieked with all her strength. And Denis shook her, and would have gone on shaking her indefinitely but for a timely interruption.

CHAPTER XXIX

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

WHEN Lady Clancarty ascended the water stairs on her return from the Tower she was outwardly calm, the floodtide of her emotion having spent itself in the outburst at the Traitor's Gate. Young Mackie, still acting as her sole escort, came up the steps behind her and the two, pausing at the top, saw dawn breaking over the river. Like a wraith the fog rolled up along the water, the sky grew pale and in the far east a light shone, keen and cold. The streets were unusually quiet; it was a little before the hour when a city stirs for its first breath; darkness lay deeply in the narrow lanes, and silence. On the river, which bristled with a forest of masts, some ships put up their sails.

Suddenly they heard a woman's scream and saw two figures struggling at the mouth of the lane before them. Mackie started toward

Father and Daughter

them, but the woman broke away and ran screaming to the water side, almost brushing against Lady Clancarty, and as she did so there was a cry of recognition and she fell upon her neck, weeping and exclaiming. It was Alice Lynn. Sir Edward seized the man.

"You rogue!" he exclaimed, "you would abuse a woman, would you?"

But the fellow, struggling lustily for his liberty, broke out with an Irish oath, and Mackie knew him.

"You are Lord Clancarty's man," he said in surprise, releasing him; "what means this? I am Sir Edward Mackie."

"Faix, there's naything the matther," replied Denis sullenly, rubbing his neck; "I was jist givin' thet dasignin' hizzy a shaking fer bethrayin' me Lord Clancarty — curse her!"

"You are mistaken, my man," said Mackie, understanding Denis's error, "I was at Secretary Vernon's when Lord Spencer came in for the warrant. Lady Clancarty has just come from the Tower where she would fain have shared your master's imprisonment. Her woman here, I doubt not, is as faithful."

"The saints be praised!" exclaimed Denis piously, "I could n't b'lave ill of her ladyship, but whin there's snake wurrk loike this, yer

My Lady Clancarty

honor, I'm afther looking fer th' woman ; 't was a woman, sir, that started in these dalings with th' ould serpent himself. Me lord's as good as did now, — woe's me ! ”

“ Say nothing like that to my lady, I charge you,” said Mackie sharply, “ she cannot bear it.”

At the moment, Betty called Denis, having heard Alice's story and divining his mistake.

“ I will forgive you, Denis,” she said, “ since it was for my lord's sake ; but you have nearly killed my poor girl with fright and she was only seeking me.”

“ Forgive me, your ladyship,” he said humbly, “ I can but die fer ye, me poor lord — ” he broke down, and Lady Clancarty said no more ; she, too, was overcome.

It did not occur to Denis to apologize to the victim of his mistaken vengeance, but when he learned that Lady Clancarty intended to make another attempt to get into the Tower, he joined himself to her party, without asking permission, and followed on, determined to go with her to his master, ignoring Alice's abhorrence.

It was with this strangely assorted company that Lady Clancarty returned at daybreak to her father's house. Not to remain, as she told

Father and Daughter

young Mackie, for never again would she dwell under the same roof with the man who had betrayed her husband.

The events of the night, quite as exciting at home as abroad, had made the Earl of Sunderland wakeful, so it happened that he was out of bed when his daughter sought him in his own room. She found him, clad in a great shag gown, sitting in an armchair by the fire, calmly sipping a cup of chocolate, his bland countenance showing no sign of perturbation, no matter what his emotions might have been. Nor did he express any surprise at his daughter's appearance in her strange guise at that unusual hour. He smiled upon her quite benignly and waved her toward a chair.

"A cup of chocolate, my love," he said, "you look fatigued."

Betty looked at him sadly. She knew only too well how hard it was to touch his heart under that polished exterior, if heart he had at all, and she had often doubted it.

"You will not sit down?" he asked with apparent surprise; "you must be tired."

"I do not wish to rest here," she replied sadly, "I cannot under the same roof with Spencer,"—she would not call him her brother; "I know you have heard all, sir,"

My Lady Clancarty

she added, watching him keenly — hoping, fearing; “I have come here to pray your good offices with the king — to ask you to help your own daughter to save her husband from death!”

Lord Sunderland held up his hand deprecatingly.

“My love,” he said, “I feared as much! Pray do not ask the impossible! You know how they hate me in Parliament because I am supposed to have the king’s ear. If I meddle in this they will bring in a bill of attainder, — it is a favorite scheme of theirs,” he added bitterly.

“But, father, they will kill my husband,” cried Betty, “they will behead him for high treason, and he only came here to see me!”

Lord Sunderland smiled and sipped his chocolate, quite unmoved.

“He is a traitor, though, my dear,” he remarked, “and quite a notorious one. My dear Betty, don’t make a scene — you know nothing about the man.”

“He is my husband,” she cried with passionate grief, “is that no tie?”

“I’ve known several fine ladies who did not consider it one,” replied the earl, with a titter, “notably my Lady Shrewsbury the elder.”

Father and Daughter

“An infamous creature, and you know it!” cried Betty, with something of her old spirit, and then she threw herself on her knees beside him; “father, father,” she pleaded, “you were ever kind to me — oh, pity me, help me to save him!”

Sunderland tried to raise her; he even caressed her bowed head. He detested a scene, and he did not know how to manage this beautiful young creature.

“My child,” he said, “this will pass; you do not know him well enough to feel his loss. The marriage was my folly; your release — though doubtless painful and cruel — will be a blessing in disguise.”

Betty recoiled from his touch, her face white.

“I love him,” she declared simply, “his death upon the block would kill me.”

“Tut, tut!” replied her father heartlessly; “we young people always die so easily.”

“I would rather die than find those of my own blood so indifferent to my wretchedness,” cried Betty.

“Perhaps you are indifferent, too,” rejoined the earl; “your mother lies ill now at Windsor.”

“I am sorry,” Betty said, “but I must try to save my husband. Father, father!” she clung to his hand weeping, “if you ever loved

My Lady Clancarty

me — as an infant, as a child, as a young girl, — do not abandon me now. Oh, help me to save him ! Do you not remember when you used to carry me in your arms — your little girl ? Oh, you were kind to me, father, kinder than any one else ! You will not break my heart now ? My mother never cared for me as you did — never caressed me so, never brought me toys. I loved you then, sir, and I love you now. Have you no place in your heart for me — your daughter, your little girl, Elizabeth ? Go to the king — you have but to ask ; they say he is merciful, and he trusts you. Oh, save Donough ! ”

Lord Sunderland sighed. “ My dear,” he said, “ I would gladly help you, but you ask the impossible. I have no power to save a traitor. You know as well as I that even the Habeas Corpus Act is suspended on account of that rogue Bernardi and his accomplices ; you know the story of the Fenwick attainder. How can you ask me to risk my head and my family reputation for this Irishman ? You fancy you love him, Betty, but ’t is only your fancy. There are other men as brave,” he added, with a smile ; “ you need not be a widow long.”

Betty sprang to her feet.

Father and Daughter

"You, too, insult me — and you are my father. Oh, I have no father, then, any more — the old, dear memories are but dreams — the hand that caressed my childish head can deal me such a blow as this! Ah, it breaks my heart! Alas, there is no earthly hope!"

Lord Sunderland poured out another cup of chocolate.

"No," he replied calmly, "not for Clancarty. Really, my dear, I must be firm, I cannot and I will not risk my reputation, perhaps my life, for —" he shrugged his shoulders, "a Jacobite rogue."

She said nothing, but she gave him a look so eloquent that he shrank a little, with all his effrontery, as she turned to leave the room. At the door she paused and waved her hand to him with a gesture of infinite sadness.

"Farewell, father," she said softly, "farewell! I loved you — I love you still — and I forgive you — as I pray to be forgiven. I go, your daughter no longer — since you disown Clancarty's wife. I have no home, no father — only my husband! Farewell, farewell!"

He heard the low sound of her weeping as she went out, her head bowed and her whole beautiful young figure full of dejection. She felt herself an outcast.

CHAPTER XXX

MY LORD OF DEVONSHIRE

LADY BETTY'S weakness passed. She was too strong, too loving, and too determined by nature, to give way to the tears and sighs of a whining woman. So stern was her face and so resolute that even Alice, with all the old claims of faithful service and affection, dared not offer her any consolation save to kiss her hand humbly and sadly.

"Ah, Alice," she said, "I cannot talk to you. When I was happy I chattered like a magpie; but now that I feel so much I am tongue-tied; yet I understand, my girl, I understand."

"I wish I could help you," Alice said, in tears, "I wish I could do something for you both!"

Betty shook her head sadly. "There is no one but the king. Ah, Alice, in my careless days I have mocked his Dutch accent and his Dutch ways — but now — I go to him as my

My Lord of Devonshire

one hope under heaven ! How foolish I have been, how heartless ! ”

She would not stay in Leicester House ; she only lingered long enough to select her plainest gown and a cloak and hood, and to take such jewels and money as belonged to her individually, before she and Alice set out, attended by the tireless Sir Edward. Not this time to the Tower, however, but to a mediator who might approach the king with more likelihood of success than any one ; the widow of the martyred Lord Russell. From Sir Edward Mackie, Lady Russell learned that morning the whole story, and her heart was touched by the despair of the young countess, suffering as she had suffered. Though of all women Lady Russell was the last one to sympathize with a Jacobite, yet her compassion moved her to forgive her enemies, and from her Lady Clancarty might look for more help than from any one, for she was an honored and revered friend of King William's.

So to Lady Russell's house in Bloomsbury the young Countess of Clancarty directed her steps, and it was on the way thither that they met the coach of my Lord of Devonshire. The great emblazoned coach drawn by four stout Flanders mares, with outriders in crimson

My Lady Clancarty

and gold lace, came clattering and rumbling along the street, the men cursing and shouting at the other vehicles that threatened to stop his grace's way. Betty and her escort stood back to escape the mud from the kennel as it passed.

The news of Spencer's despicable act and of Clancarty's arrest had been spread over the town by the young men at Secretary Vernon's dinner. When his grace saw Lady Clancarty afoot at that early hour, therefore, he ordered his coach to stop and descended with great dignity.

She did not wait for him to speak, running up to him with an eager face.

"My lord, my lord," she cried, "I claim your promise at Newmarket. You will help me save my Lord Clancarty."

Devonshire gracefully kissed her hand.

"Dear Lady Clancarty," he replied, "I would hesitate only at John the Baptist's head upon a charger! I shall keep my promise. Indeed, 'tis partly kept already, for I have just arranged with my Lords of Ormond and Bedford to go with me to Kensington for your sake. But," the great man paused, glancing at the beautiful face, "my dear child, you would be the best suppliant," he added.

My Lord of Devonshire

"I will go," Betty answered, "though, indeed, my lord, I do not know how the king will receive me—he is so cold ! And my father —" her voice broke at the word ; " Lord Sunderland will not help me. Sir Edward has suggested Lady Russell as an intercessor."

An expression of surprise passed over Devonshire's face, but it brightened.

"I know of no one better," he said gravely ; " nay, dear Lady Clancarty, take heart of grace ; your cold king is a merciful one."

Betty drew a sharp breath.

"My Lord Clancarty is out of his clemency," she said faintly ; " the Habeas Corpus Act —" she could say no more.

Devonshire looked grave and his eyes met Mackie's significantly, but he took her hand.

"My child," he said kindly, "you will go in my carriage to Lady Russell's and then I will go to Kensington ; we will not surrender until we are beaten. You are not wont to be faint hearted."

"I am changed," she replied ; "the old Betty is quite dead, I think, my lord ; now I am only the shadow of Clancarty ; as he suffers so also do I. If I could but see him !"

My Lady Clancarty

"I have sent to the Tower," said the duke reassuringly, "and I think I may get a letter for you. Would a word be any comfort?"

"Ah, my lord!" she exclaimed, and kissed his hand impulsively.

Once in the coach they travelled rapidly; the duke talking of other things, seeing well enough that her strength was overtaxed. He was still talking when the carriage turned from Little Queen Street and stopped in Bloomsbury Square. He led her by the hand into the presence of Rachel, Lady Russell, his kinswoman by marriage, and Lady Betty never forgot the benevolence of the great man's face, the kindly pressure of his hand, the fatherly interest of his glance, as he walked beside her in the splendid dress he had assumed to go to court. Nor did she forget the sad, sweet dignity of the widow who rose to meet them and came forward with such reserve of manner until she saw Lady Betty's face, then she held out both hands, tears glistening in her eyes; she scarcely courtesied to the duke.

"My child!" she exclaimed, "my poor child, I too have suffered so. Ah, my lord, when will the Traitor's Gate close, save on a woman's bleeding heart?" and she kissed the young countess on brow and cheek.

My Lord of Devonshire

"My husband," faltered Betty, "you know, dear madam, that he is a Jacobite?"

"I know it," Lady Russell answered sadly; "but he is also a brave man and, as I know, the idol of one woman's heart. Alas, my lord," she added gravely to Devonshire, "do you love us well enough to make amends for the broken hearts — the faithful broken hearts?"

His Grace of Devonshire only bowed his head while the elder sufferer clasped the younger in her arms and caressed her, speaking kind and soothing words, like a mother to the daughter of her heart. A moment later, when she glanced an inquiry at him over Betty's head, he shook his gravely, framing "no" with his lips, for he had no hope, or next to none. So he told young Mackie as they left the house together.

"Poor young creature," said his grace gravely, "she shall command my utmost endeavors; Spencer is a cold-hearted rogue — and her father!" the duke shrugged his shoulders; "as for Clancarty, he's more likely to be made an example than an exception."

"He's a brave man, your grace," said Mackie generously, "and there are many of his persuasion."

"A poor philosophy, my boy," replied the

My Lady Clancarty

duke ; “ this fellow is notorious, besides. Do you know his history ? ”

“ No,” said Mackie sadly, “ I see only her agony.”

“ It was Ormond who introduced him to her at Newmarket, and I suspect that his grace knew who ‘ Mr. Trevor ’ really was, though he does n’t admit it. But I believe she divined it at once. Clancarty has a history,” his grace went on ; “ he was bred a Protestant, but when he went back to Ireland, in the late king’s time, he fell in with Papist kinsfolk and it served his turn at court to be a Papist, so my young lord turned his coat ; a wild rogue, sir, let me tell you, yet this young girl loves him ! He sat in the Celtic Parliament at King’s Inns, — a very pretty recommendation to King William, — he commanded a regiment in King James’s army and was taken by Marlborough, but succeeded in getting off. The estates of Clancarty — they are held to be worth ten thousand a year — are confiscated, and you know who has the greater share ? ” added the duke significantly, “ my Lord Woodstock. William will not despoil his Dutch favorites for a Jacobite.”

Young Mackie’s face was grave.

“ She asks only for his life,” he said, “ and she

My Lord of Devonshire

pleads so eloquently that I think no man but one of stone can refuse her."

Devonshire smiled broadly.

"Not you, at least, my dear sir," he replied, "if my eyes mistake not."

The young man turned crimson.

"Your grace," he said, "I do confess it; but I have seen her so like an angel in her devotion, so forgetful of all but him, that, loving her, I would risk my life to give him back to her."

The duke took a pinch of snuff and stood tapping the jewelled lid of the box thoughtfully.

"A very pretty sentiment, Sir Edward," he said genially, "and I honor you for it. By my faith, I would not risk my own heart against her tears, or her smiles, either," he added smiling, "though you need not mention it. But I have small hope, sir, small hope; the king has been, as we know, overmerciful and fostered rebellion at his very door. What is it the great bard says?

" 'What doth cherish weeds but gentle air?

And what make robbers bold but too much lenity?'

And at this time, after the recent troubles, his majesty is not like to be advised to mercy," and his grace shook his head; "there is but little hope!"

CHAPTER XXXI

LADY RUSSELL

IT happened that Lady Russell advised delay in the appeal to the king; she wished to wait for the results of the interview between his majesty and the three dukes. Surely no fair woman ever won greater mediators as quickly as did poor Lady Betty.

Lady Russell hoped little, however, from their efforts, though she said not a word of this to the distracted young wife but, instead, pointed out the advantages of waiting until they could appeal to William quite alone—as two women in distress—and with no connection with any political embroglio. Indeed, the older woman knew the king well enough to be sure that his heart might be touched by a woman's grief, though in affairs of state he could be adamant. In spite of Betty's impatience and misery, they waited, and Devonshire, Ormond, and Bedford, two great English peers and the greatest Irish one, went up to Kensington to save one young woman's heart from

Lady Russell

breaking, caring little enough for the Jacobite earl himself.

It was during this season of delay, when despair and hope were mingled, that one of Devonshire's gentlemen brought a packet from the Tower and gave it to Lady Clancarty with much elaborate courtesy. And she? She fled with it to her room — Lady Russell had insisted upon keeping her under her own roof — and she kissed and wept over it, before she opened it, although she knew that the Governor of the Tower had read it all before her, hard necessity!

It contained a ring, a letter, and the dried sprig of shamrock, and her eyes were half blinded with tears as she tried to read.

“My own dear wife,” it ran, “a gentleman from my Lord of Devonshire has just been with me and has told me of your noble devotion to me in this dark hour, of your efforts in my behalf. Dear heart, dear heart, how can I write all I feel, or tell my gratitude to the great duke for befriending you? To tell the truth, I have little hope that my pardon can be obtained, but I do hope and pray to see you once more! Ah, the separation, Betty, I did not know how hard it would be to bear — doubly hard now that I know you suffer, too.

My Lady Clancarty

Bear up, brave heart, under the despair also ; indeed, I know you will, for my sake, and afterwards — you will go to see my mother, who is, I know, broken hearted — and you will comfort her for me. Ah, I did not mean to write to you sadly, sweetheart, but the loss of you drives me to distraction. I see you constantly as you looked unconscious in my arms, and it wrings my heart. Dear love, I send you my ring and our bit of shamrock, and I will not believe that I shall not see you again — 't would be too cruel.

“ Dear heart, sweet wife, — farewell ! ”

Poor Lady Betty, she wept over it and caressed it like a living thing, for he had touched it ; and she hid the shamrock and the ring in her bosom.

In this distracted state she waited forty-eight hours longer, until she knew that the three dukes had obtained no definite promise from the king and that the Earl of Sunderland, who was supposed to command his majesty's ear, was proclaiming everywhere his approval of Spencer's deed. The cloud grew darker rather than brighter, and in her agony she would have gone alone to Kensington, for Lady Russell's caution seemed to her only distracting delay.

Lady Russell

However, the older woman only lingered to take her steps more surely. She drew up, with Devonshire's help, a formal petition to the king, not trusting to any verbal or interrupted statement of the case, and at last, just when the young countess was reduced almost to madness, she signified her readiness to accompany her to court.

The king was at Kensington and the two set out, a little before noon, in Lady Russell's carriage, for the palace. Betty had worn her heart out with grief and impatience; she had not slept and she had scarcely tasted food, except under compulsion, and was a shadow of herself—but still a beautiful one. Lady Russell knew intuitively all that the younger woman had suffered, and when they were in the carriage, she laid her hand gently over Betty's.

"My dear," she said, "I know how cruel this delay has seemed, but, believe me, 't was for the best. Our appeal must be quite distinct from that of the three dukes, and it must be only from our hearts—as two desolate women."

Betty forced herself to speak with composure.

"You know the king, madam," she said, "and I do not—or, at least, only slightly and,

My Lady Clancarty

alas, he has ever seemed cold to me and unapproachable."

"You truly do not know him," Lady Russell rejoined gently; "I do not think, dear Lady Clancarty, that a great man is ever heartless, and this man is great."

Betty, who looked at the Dutch king with thoroughly English eyes, raised her brows expressively but said nothing.

"Yes," continued the older woman, looking thoughtfully out of the carriage window, "after awhile the English people will do him justice. What other man could have held the coalition of European powers together against France? or could have raised England from the degradation into which his uncles had plunged her to her present dignity?"

Lady Betty sighed wearily; her heart was in the Tower.

"I know that I have heard him called the arbiter of Europe," she replied, "but he is so very Dutch, dear Lady Russell, and so stern and cold in his way."

"Not cold," said Lady Russell, "but merciful. His uncle James was cold—look at the pleading of Monmouth, 'twould have moved a heart of stone—and Charles was often cruel."

Lady Russell

"Alas! King William may turn as deaf an ear to me," cried the young countess, with a quivering voice; "was ever fate more cruel? If he is beheaded I shall die!"

Lady Russell said nothing, but gave her so eloquent a look that Betty broke down.

"Forgive me!" she cried, "oh, forgive me! How selfish grief makes us; I forgot—"

"I lived," said the widow quietly.

Betty fell to weeping silently.

"'T would be worse to live!" she moaned.

"It is worse," retorted Lady Russell; "grief eats into the heart like a canker; but I lived for his son!"

Betty's head went lower down; sobs shook her from head to foot. The older woman put her arm around her.

"I know," she said, "I know, but we are going to a great man—a great king. Dear child, let us hope. You do not know King William. Melancholy and personal misfortunes seem to be wrapped in the birthright of the Stuarts, but, ah, my dear, this man is descended also from the house of that great prince who set Holland free. Mercy belongs, of right, to mighty princes."

"I love a great man," said Betty, drying her tears.

My Lady Clancarty

“So do all women,” replied Lady Russell; “it is born in us; we do not love littleness or weakness. This is a very solemn matter and we may not judge the king, or judge for him.”

Lady Clancarty did not reply, she could not; she was struggling to conquer her emotions, to prepare herself for the coming interview, and Lady Russell took her hand and held it in silent sympathy.

The agony of that hour of suspense was almost too much to bear; her husband's life hanging in the balance, at the will of this stern, silent man; this man who seemed to her — as he did to many of the English, an unsympathetic, phlegmatic Dutchman — an alien in the land.

“Yonder is the palace,” remarked Lady Russell, in a strangely quiet voice, though her hand clasped tightly over Betty's.

They both looked out on the palace and the green before it, the barrack buildings and the gates, at which a dozen or more emblazoned coaches waited, and they could see the sun flash on the arms of the guards within and without the gates.

The girl drew her breath sharply; she shook from head to foot.

Lady Russell

“Ah, madam,” she cried wildly, “if he says — ‘no’!”

Lady Russell bowed her head, her lips moved; her thoughts went back to the dreadful days of the Rye House Plot; she thought of herself beside her husband at his trial, of his last hours; she seemed to see him in the coach, driven almost past his home on his way to die in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. She shuddered, too, but in a moment her serene sadness returned.

“We must put our trust in the King of kings,” she said gently, clasping her hands and looking upward.

Betty wept silently; at that moment every hope seemed to die in her heart.

Meanwhile, the coach rolled heavily and surely as fate itself along the High Street of Kensington, and at last through the palace gates.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE KING

KENSINGTON PALACE was an offence in those days to English eyes. The burning of Whitehall had furnished William with the opportunity to escape, not only from the air of London, which aggravated his asthma, but also from the crowd of sycophants who choked the galleries of the city palace. Long muddy roads and exorbitant charges for conveyance made it no easy matter for the spendthrift courtier and the needy adventurer to torment the king at Kensington. He was as well pleased at the escape as they were disgruntled; but even here they could pursue him with annoyances.

The malcontents in Parliament had stripped him of his beloved Dutch guards, and in their stead the Life Guards saluted at his threshold.

It was through a file of these gay gentlemen that Betty passed with Lady Russell, and they stared not a little at the lovely face of the

The King

young countess, though they received both with every token of respect and courtesy. Lady Russell was, indeed, a well-known and honored guest at the palace, and they were conducted by an officer of the household to the anteroom of the king's presence chamber, there to await his pleasure.

The long room was already filled with visitors of almost every degree, come upon various errands, and Lady Clancarty found it no light thing to face the ill-disguised curiosity and admiration that assailed her on all sides.

Here was a peer, in the splendid dress of the court, glittering with jewels and gold lace, curled and perfumed and ruffled; here a plainly dressed shrewd fellow, with a bundle of papers, a clerk from the foreign office, for the king was his own minister of foreign affairs; there was a richly dressed magnate of the city, with an eye on the interests of the East India Company; there an eager applicant for office; and farther off, a despairing petitioner who glanced in open sympathy at Lady Clancarty.

A king's anteroom! How many secret histories are written here; what comedy, what tragedy!

The low murmur of talk rose and fell;

My Lady Clancarty

great ladies, powdered and patched, swept their furbelows through the crowd and swayed their fans, chattering lightly of a hundred things ; great lords bowed and smiled and took snuff and cursed the king, in their hearts, for keeping them waiting. A pair of lovers, two young things, were cooing in a window recess, as indifferent to the public as a pair of turtle-doves, and Betty looked at them with dull eyes. The wait seemed to be for hours, and the heated atmosphere and the flutter of talk almost suffocated her. She looked up and saw the door open and her father coming out of the king's closet, pleased, smiling, courteous to all, greeting them right and left, bowing here, extending a hand there. Betty felt that he saw her, but he averted his face and she stepped back into the window recess near at hand and opened the sash ; she could not breathe. While she stood there his Grace of Devonshire came up and had a few words with Lady Russell.

"Is there any hope?" her ladyship asked sadly, with a meaning glance aside at the young figure in its plain black garb.

His grace shook his head.

"I see none," he replied, very low ; "there has been such a demand for examples ; the

The King

people are so tired of these conspiracies, and they are like to class Clancarty with the worst. You know the king, that reserve of his betrays nothing, but I think I never saw him less inclined to mercy."

Lady Russell's face became intensely grave.

"I shall do all I can," she said, "my utmost. Poor young thing, her heart is breaking!"

The duke cast a look of deep concern toward Lady Clancarty and shook his head again. The next moment he smiled, as she turned to them, smiled and kissed her hand as an open sign of his sympathy and support. She said nothing; she only looked searchingly into his eyes and her lips quivered. Would it be much longer?

The talk rose and fell; some woman laughed, the shallow cackling laugh that comes from the empty heart and the empty head; the crackling of thorns under a pot.

An usher bowed before Lady Russell and she held out her hand to Betty. The duke smiled again reassuringly; and the two women walked slowly through the throng, passed in at a low doorway, and in a moment there was stillness.

They had entered a low-ceiled room, lighted

My Lady Clancarty

by one large window ; it was plainly but richly furnished and near a table strewn with papers stood a small, thin man. He was dressed in black velvet, with a ruffled cravat of Mechlin and a star on his breast ; he wore a great curled periwig. Insignificant in size but with a wonderful majesty of bearing ; the king of three kingdoms and the stadt-holder of Hollander — William of Orange.

As they entered he turned and stood looking at them. His complexion was a clear, pale olive ; his eagle nose and brilliant eyes immediately commanding attention, with something, too, in the cold majesty of his mien and the habitual sadness of his expression. His face, narrow at the chin, expanded widely at the brows, and his glance was singularly luminous. His eyes a clear hazel, with a depth to them like the clear brown of some mountain pool undisturbed by any ripple upon the surface, deep and transparent ; his thin figure was inclined to stoop, and he had a racking cough, left behind by smallpox.

He greeted Lady Russell and the young countess with perfect courtesy, but his reserve remained as icy as ever, and like a cloak about him ; warm-hearted Betty shivered, stricken silent.

The King

"Sire, we come to you as humble suppliants," Lady Russell said, "to pray you to graciously receive our petition. I need not tell your majesty that this is Lord Sunderland's daughter, the unhappy wife of the Earl of Clancarty."

"My Lords of Devonshire and Ormond have already told me," the king said, coughing a little as he cast a thoughtful look at the young countess; "I am sorry," he added, "that it is so."

"Ah, sire, have mercy on us both," murmured Lady Betty, finding her tongue at last; "to you belongs the glory of mercy. Spare him, your majesty, he came here only to see me — to see his wife."

The king did not reply, but took the petition from Lady Russell and laid it on the table.

"Let me plead for her, sire," said the widow gently, "I need not remind your majesty that I have suffered as she is suffering. I knelt to plead for life to King Charles, as she kneels now to King William, and I knelt in vain. They carried my husband — almost past his own home — to his death and I — ah, my king, I lived! That is the terror of it, and the cruelty; you cannot divine it, — 't is martyrdom!" the widow's voice was shaken

My Lady Clancarty

by the agony of recollection and for the moment she could say no more. "I pray you humbly, if I have ever served your majesty or deserved well at your hands, to consider our petition. We ask but life — all else we leave in your hands. Let us remind you, sire, that of all the qualities that most adorn your gracious character that of mercy has ever shone conspicuous, has won the hearts of your people —"

William held up his hand with a bitter smile.

"Say no more, madam," he interrupted ironically; "'t is not often that I am reminded of my conquest of the hearts of the English people!"

Lady Betty threw herself on her knees before him.

"Sire," she cried, "I pray for mercy — for life! Ah, think, your majesty, the day must come when you, too, will look for mercy — and I am sure your pity for us now will comfort you then. I only ask my husband's life — his life!"

Her voice broke pitifully; how little she could say! Agony ties the tongue; she looked up through her tears and wrung her hands together with a gesture of despair, an appeal more eloquent than words.

The King

"O gracious sovereign," she murmured faintly, "life — life! That is my cry to you — only spare him to me."

A cough racked the king, and for the moment he was silent. Lady Russell trembled for the effect of the appeal. He raised the countess kindly.

"My child," he said, "these matters are not always as much at the king's disposal as they seem; you forget my parliament;" a dry smile flickered across his face; "I can make you no unconditional promise until I have considered your petition, and those of others in this matter. Your husband has been a conspicuous offender, but if I can save him —" he broke off, closing his lips tightly, his face singularly stern and sad.

Betty thought he had yielded and began to pour out her thanks weeping, but the king held up his hand coldly.

"I can make no unconditional promise," he repeated dryly, "reserve your thanks until there is a certainty — but," he added, after a moment's hesitation, "think not hardly hereafter of your Dutch king."

Betty turned crimson and William gave Lady Russell a significant glance.

"Your husband is an old offender, Lady

My Lady Clancarty

Clancarty," he added, with his rasping little cough ; " he not only fought in Ireland but he sat in that parliament at King's Inns, and there are others who might base a claim for indemnity upon any clemency that he received. But rest assured," he continued, " that the king has as much feeling as any other man — and heavier sorrows."

He gently and kindly dismissed them, but Betty having gone half way across the room ran back, as impulsive as any child, and kneeling on one knee kissed his hand, and then ran out weeping, as unmindful of etiquette as a country lass.

On the stairs she looked up through her tears at Lady Russell.

" I understand you now," she said, deeply moved ; " I felt his greatness — he is a king ! But, oh, will he be merciful ? will he spare my poor husband ? "

Lady Russell could not answer ; she turned her face aside. She felt that the king had given them so little hope, that his answer had been enigmatical. She took Betty's hand again, but neither of them could speak ; and in silence they went home to the house in Bloomsbury.

CHAPTER XXXIII

DONOUGH !

THE night of suspense — longer than a year of happiness — wore to an end, because all things end. At noon Lady Betty stood in Lady Russell's drawing-room, leaning against the window and looking out, so wan and wasted that her hostess started at the sight of her as she entered. The two women greeted each other with an affection born of sympathy, in spite of their brief acquaintance, and as they stood there with clasped hands, they heard the clatter of hoofs in the street below, a noise at the door, steps on the stair.

Betty uttered a cry and stood rigid ; it had come, good or ill ! The door was flung open and Devonshire's messenger, plashed with mire from hard riding, bowed at the threshold, holding up a letter.

"From his grace to Lady Russell," he said.

Lady Russell tore it open with shaking hands but Betty did not stir ; she stood like

My Lady Clancarty

a statue; she thought her heart had stopped beating. The older woman clasped the paper to her bosom, murmuring a thanksgiving.

"He is saved!" she cried joyfully, holding out the letter to Lady Clancarty, "your husband is saved! The king grants his life, but exiles him."

Lady Betty swayed and would have fallen but for her friend. The good woman caught her in her arms.

"That merciful king!" cried Lady Russell, tears streaming down her face; "ah, if I had been so blessed!"

Betty flung her arms around her neck and kissed her.

"I must go to the Tower!" she cried eagerly, after a moment, "I may go now."

"Nay, madam," interposed the duke's messenger respectfully, "his grace did especially charge me to beg you to remain here until he came for you."

"Ay," said Lady Russell, glancing at the letter, "he speaks of it here."

A shade of deep disappointment crossed the youthful face, but she bowed her head.

"I shall await the duke's pleasure," she said.

After the messenger withdrew, Lady Russell touched her friend's frock playfully.

Donough !

"My dear," she remarked, "you will not go to welcome him back to the world in this sombre garb?"

Betty glanced down dolefully.

"I brought no other," she replied.

Lady Russell smiled and sent for Alice.

"My child," she said, "I heard this morning that there was strong hope — yet I dared not tell you, for fear of disappointment. But I sent Alice for a gayer gown than this for your lover."

Betty blushed like a rose, for in walked Alice, carrying in her arms the flowered brocade that her mistress had worn at Newmarket, and Alice was all smiles and tears. Nothing would do but that Lady Russell and Alice must array her as for a festival.

"For the Tower!" protested Betty, between tears and laughter, trembling and listening for a sound.

"For your husband," whispered Lady Russell, kissing her cheek, "the king has granted you a pension sufficient for you on the Continent — alas, that you must go."

"Ah, but with him," said Lady Betty smiling divinely.

It was while they talked that Alice came by chance upon Denis on the staircase; Denis was

My Lady Clancarty

smiling like a cherub. He stood before her awkwardly.

"Faix," he said, "I was afther thinking ye a sneak, my darlint, but, shure, I misjudged ye," he paused, shuffling his feet with unfamiliar shyness in his aspect, while Alice eyed him with prim disapproval.

"My darlint," he said, "I 'm afther makin' some aminds fer th' batin'; will — will ye be Mrs. Dinis now?"

But Alice withered him with a look.

"There's no need of ill will, my darlint," he continued nervously; "faix, I know a man that always bates his wife whin his affection overcomes him."

"You don't know me!" exclaimed Alice indignantly, red as a poppy.

Denis, not a whit abashed, would have caught her hand.

"There's nathing in th' wurld to kape us from gittin' acquainted, me love," he said gallantly.

"Deliver me from a bloody Papist!" said Alice piously, escaping up the stair and leaving Denis grinning openly in his relief, for he had contemplated a noble sacrifice of his own feelings.

Meanwhile Lady Russell and the countess

Donough!

had descended to the drawing-room again to await my Lord of Devonshire's arrival. Like a rose, Betty had bloomed out with joy, radiant in her beautiful gown, trembling and impatient. She paced the floor, Lady Russell watching her.

"Ah," she said, "why can I not go at once to the Tower? 'T is so hard to wait!"

"The duke would go with you," Lady Russell replied quietly, "and it is best so."

"He has been so good to me — to us!" Betty murmured, a break in her voice.

She was thinking of her father's averted face, her brother's cruelty, her tittering, painted, heartless mother. "He is kinder than my own blood," she said, "he and the king."

"He remembered even the pension," Lady Russell assented, "that good king!"

But Lady Betty scarcely heard her; she strained her ears to catch far other sounds. The rumble of a heavy coach, the closing of a door, steps in the hall. She fled to the top of the staircase, like a startled bird, and looked down; through a window beside her the sun shone in. There were many below, my Lord of Devonshire, a stately figure, the Duke of Ormond, young Sir Edward Mackie, half a dozen gentlemen. But she did not see them; what were they to her?

My Lady Clancarty

She saw a tall figure, a handsome, eager face, as Clancarty sprang up the stairs.

Lady Betty held out her arms, the sun shining in her face.

"Donough!" she cried, "my own true love!"

THE END



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